
Cities, towards Missing Identities?

Synergy Management of Sustainable Protection and Use of Cultural Urban Heritage
in the Context of Global Change - the case of Tehran



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in the Context of Global Change - the case of Tehran

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Abstract

On a global scale, the complex interrelationships between cultural identity and heritage have for long been a topic of interest to many urban scholars. Tracing back ‘the modern concept of heritage’, which certainly emerged from a European context, one could track the expansion of its notions within an over three-century time span. There has been more recently a growing trend toward alternative perceptions of cultural heritage with a fresh interest in the nonmaterial aspects of the matter. Such shift in the general view started to partly turn the focus away from the material past, and with that triggered off some debates around what matters more. This is while, very often, newer definitions of heritage are either undertheorized or less dived into by academics and largely neglected by practitioners. That is partly why heritage studies have newly found itself at a turning point where many critical arguments thus arisen. This research, therefore, touches upon the challenges that reconceptualization of cultural heritage entails in terms of urban management.

On the theoretical level, inspired by the concept of intangible cultural heritage, this research works on ‘meanings’ of urban heritage while looking into historical neighborhoods of the case of Tehran. By exploring the relationships between people and place, the research offers a deeper insight on some of the overlooked qualities that actually make up the character or essence of those urban areas. They could be best described as qualities with some sort of nonmaterial nature or nontangible connotation, no matter whether they stem from tangible things or intangible things. The primary aim is to build up to a more flexible and less predetermined view on what should and what should not be considered as worthwhile when it comes to heritages of urban areas for their people and communities. On the empirical level, in reference to the typically differing motives for heritage conservation and urban development, this research brings attention to the major changes which resulted from intervention practices in the case of Tehran’s historical center. While observing Iran’s contemporary political economy, the research argues why and how dynamics of city planning in Tehran rather knowingly overlooked historical neighborhoods until very recently, if not still. So, the idea is to, from one angle, find out the mindset behind some of the actual practices carried out by relevant administration and operation agencies which have been planned and designed by professionals; and, from the other angle, indicate why the locals’ viewpoints on the places they hold dear or even not are increasingly part of urban heritage studies. In addition to on field empirical study and desk research on secondary data resources, this research makes use of semi structured interviews conducted with a number of experts and national/local authorities involved in Iran/Tehran’s heritage management as well as informal conversations with individuals and groups of ordinary people.

Zusammenfassung

Auf globaler Ebene sind die komplexen Zusammenhänge zwischen kultureller Identität und Erbe seit langem ein Thema, das viele Wissenschaftlerinnen und Wissenschaftler in der Stadtforschung interessiert. Ausgehend vom „modernen Konzept des Kulturerbes“, das zweifellos aus dem europäischen Kontext hervorgegangen ist, kann man die Erweiterung seiner Begrifflichkeiten innerhalb einer Zeitspanne von über drei Jahrhunderten verfolgen.

In jüngster Zeit ist ein zunehmender Trend zu alternativen Sichtweisen auf das kulturelle Erbe mit einem neuen Interesse an den immateriellen Aspekten zu verzeichnen. Ein solcher Perspektivwechsel begann, den Fokus teilweise von der materiellen Vergangenheit abzuwenden, und löste damit einige Debatten über das aus, was wirklich zählt. Dabei werden sehr oft neuere Definitionen des Erbes entweder untertheoretisiert oder von Akademikern weniger berücksichtigt und von Praktikern weitgehend ignoriert. Das ist auch der Grund, warum sich die Heritage Forschung erneut an einem Wendepunkt befindet, an dem viele kritische Argumente aufgetreten sind.

Die vorliegende Forschung befasst sich daher mit den Herausforderungen, die mit einer Neukonzeption des kulturellen Erbes im Hinblick auf das Stadtmanagement zu berücksichtigen sind. Durch die Untersuchung der Beziehungen zwischen Mensch und Ort bietet die Forschung einen tieferen Einblick in einige der übersehenen Qualitäten, die den Charakter oder die Essenz dieser Stadtgebiete ausmachen. Sie lassen sich am besten als Qualitäten mit immaterieller Natur oder immaterieller Konnotation beschreiben, egal ob sie aus materiellen oder immateriellen Dingen stammen. Das Hauptziel besteht darin, eine offenerere und weniger vorgegebene Sichtweise darauf aufzubauen, was und was nicht als wertvoll angesehen werden sollte, wenn es um das Erbe der städtischen Gebiete für ihre Menschen und Gemeinschaften geht. Auf empirischer Ebene wird in Bezug auf die typischerweise unterschiedlichen Motivationen für Denkmalpflege und Stadtentwicklung auf die großen Veränderungen hingewiesen, die sich aus den Eingriffen in das historische Zentrum Teherans ergeben haben. Unter Berücksichtigung der politischen Ökonomie des Iran wird untersucht, warum und in welcher Weise die Dynamik der Stadtplanung in Teheran bis vor kurzem, wenn nicht sogar noch wissentlich, historische Stadtteile übersehen hat.

Dahinter steht die Idee, aus einem Blickwinkel einerseits die Denkweise hinter einigen Praktiken der zuständigen Behörden und Institutionen herauszufinden, die von Fachleuten geplant und gestaltet wurden, und andererseits aufzuzeigen, warum die Standpunkte der Einheimischen zu den Orten, die Ihnen lieb und teuer sind oder nicht, zunehmend Gegenstand der Heritage Forschung sind.

Neben der empirischen Feldstudie und der Analyse von sekundären Datenquellen werden in der vorliegenden Forschungsarbeit semi-strukturierte Interviews mit einer Reihe von Experten und nationalen/lokalen Behörden und Institutionen, die sich mit dem Management des Kulturerbes im Iran/Teheran befassen, sowie informelle Gespräche mit Einzelpersonen und Gruppen von Menschen vor Ort durchgeführt.

1. Introduction

“I don't want to be a tree; I want to be its meaning.”
from *My Name is Red* by Orhan Pamuk

The general topic of this research is heritage, more specifically, urban heritage. There is a huge body of literature in international level on the subject, looking at it from a number of different angles, but what interests me the most is to better understand notions of cultural heritage in urban contexts, by having a closer look at the purposes of heritage. I walk my discussion through the Iranian case of Tehran, in order to figure out what might constitute urban heritage in such cultural scenery, what really matters [to whom], and why.

To begin with, the idea is to briefly outline what have been considered as heritage hitherto, why that has been so, and how those heritages have been protected. This is to understand the background of the most recent debates around heritage. On the side, I overview the sequential conditions of heritage conservation in Iran, as an example, to get the picture of the base on which current situation of historical center of the city Tehran is founded. I continue my argument with bringing in some newer extensions of heritage studies, and specifically focus on ‘meanings’ of cultural heritage. By exploring the relationships between people and place and highlighting the nonmaterial values attached to any kind of cultural heritage, I provide a deeper interpretation of urban heritage.

1.1. Background on Urban Identity Crisis

As time passes, change inevitably happens in various aspects of cities. Yet, cities around the world today are becoming more and more alike. They seem to be pushed by overwhelming forces of the global homogenization, for which several explanations can be given¹. By referring to examples of New York City and Sydney and some others which “many cities copy the look and name” of their styles, i.e., iconic structures, trendy neighborhoods, etc., Sharon Zukin (2010, 231) not only points at “elements of sameness” as “consumers’ strivings for the good life” but also perceives them as “cities’ conscious use of culture to polish their image and jump-start investment.” City officials are influenced by, as she names, the toolkit of cultural strategies which suggest that their cities no matter larger or smaller can be winners, clean, safe, with a sense of belonging. Such image of the modern creative city is so wanted everywhere in the world, because cities aspire to look different. To copy ideas is used to outdo each other’s achievements, whether deliberately or in some cases unintentionally, which leads to ‘McGuggenization’ when they are applied in one city after another, even if with local variations. The net result of these global games is actually an overbearing sameness, not too different from the ‘great blight of dullness’ that Jane Jacobs despised. Only after a while running on the endless treadmill of producing the same different, cities normally but not necessarily start to crave authenticity² and search for their urban identity. The term identity refers here to the ways in which cities use markers such as heritage, language, religion, ethnicity, nationalism, and shared interpretations of the past to construct narratives of inclusion and exclusion that define their communities and the ways in which these latter

¹ According to Jane Jacobs, 20th century modernizers, namely architects and urban planners; according to David Harvey, the actions of investors, developers, and officials to maximize profit; and according to Malcolm Tait and Ole Jensen, the flow of trendy strategies or traveling ideas.

² “Yearning for authenticity reflects the separation between our experience of space and our sense of self that is so much a part of modern mentalities. Though we think authenticity refers to a neighborhood’s innate qualities, it really expresses our own anxieties about how places change (Zukin, 2010, 220).”

are rendered specific and differentiated (Graham and Howard, 2008, 5). An important but commonly overlooked point is that not all identities are self-made or self-defined, but they are always 'marked out by difference', implying the marking of symbolic boundaries and the generation of frontier effects (Neill, 2004, 3). The attribution of social identity, therefore, involves the power to classify the dominant group's placing, whether it is consensual or imposed. So, this act of categorizing may or may not validate the internal self-definition. "At the same time, however, and implicated directly in the process of external definition, identity may be based on a process of self-definition or ascription which generates a subjective, experiential element (Rew and Campbell, 1999, 11)." It nevertheless requires a narrative of continuity³ between past, present, and future. This means, selfhood is not only the self as it differs from the others, it is in continuation of the preceding self but also different from that. "In one of reviews concerning this issue, based on ideas of Edward Said and Paul Ricoeur, terminology of identity reveals a duality in its meaning, which can be expressed with 'same' and 'self'. While self develops through the time, same resists against it (Memar, 2008)."

Discussions on urban identity have always been in close ties with concurrent discourses in heritage studies. The more classical approaches are those of safeguarding the material past, if of value, in order to be passed on intact to the future. Approaches of that sort are still valid in several ways and for many cases. To date, however, debates on the topic have been expanding to such an extent that almost anything can be perceived to be heritage. It is increasingly apparent as well that without proper maintenance and management of the communities' heritages no matter what, they become gradually worn out, underappreciated, and eventually missing. This is while, very often, newer definitions of heritage are either undertheorized or less dived into by academics and largely neglected by practitioners (Harrison, 2013b, 3). There are processes happening in many cities around the world which attempt to reengineer the experience of cities by means of their heritage assets. They mainly concentrate on the construction of marketable heritages, though (Amin and Thrift, 2002, 56). Where the boundaries or overlaps of heritage conservation lie with tourism, urban development, and collective memories raises many other questions about theories of heritage and its methodologies in both research and practice. When taking the city as a single entity into account, it is not simple to adopt a clear-cut approach on what are urban heritages and what are not, which criteria or value systems to define for deciding how to translate our conservation driven thoughts into actions, and above all how far the policies and plans could actually deliver the aim of upholding heritage.

1.2. Problem Outline

On a global scale, the complex interrelationships between cultural identity and heritage have for long been a topic of interest to many urban scholars. According to conventional notions, it is commonly accepted that cultural identity, of a city in general and any urban area in particular, is undoubtedly rooted in its heritage possessions, namely built heritage. While this is logic, yet one could say that cities inevitably evolve since all cities are 'in a state of continuous change', and likewise our built heritage could not be exempt from this fact. Zukin (2010, 221) discusses change in cities as "a paradigm shift from a city of production to a city of consumption, and from a resigned acceptance of decline to a surprising disillusionment with growth." From this viewpoint, there is not a single city in the world that has entirely retained its built originals within the city's setting over time. Still, "places are identified with what does not change; their 'sense of place', 'character' or 'identity' is seen as relatively stable (Dovey, 2009, 3)." In that sense, I believe, while the city is evolving anyway, the issue of heritage preservation could not be merely a matter of selecting appropriate or worthy physical

³ "Speaking at the level of collective identities, as Dolores Hayden reiterates, 'identity is intimately tied to memory' (Hayden, 1997: 9). Indeed it is the present assault on memory, with the constant bombardment of commercial images eroding a sense of continuity between past, present and future, that can lead to pessimism concerning the possibility of the construction of meaningful identities. Identity requires a narrative of continuity (Neill, 2004, 10)."

bodies of architecture and otherwise to keep or freeze forever, which is not rationally possible after all. Or, in other words, while this systematic work of selection and preservation might be necessary, it alone does not provide sufficient cause for the longevity of cultural heritage. One of the main logics supporting this assumption pertains to the concept of cultural heritage as it relates to human existence which overreaches the physical body. Given these somehow diverging considerations, it is time to face the much-needed confusion and uncertainty about what we are used to name heritage, and whether our typical perceptions have to be revisited. There has been an increasing concern about urban heritage conservation as a controversial issue in both theoretical debates and experimental practices. However, there is still a considerable void in our understanding of cultural heritage itself as a subjective matter, and how it relates to different emotions or opinions which shape our notions of self and urban experience. That is basically why, I think, we need to question our prescribed perceptions of these terms and rethink the compound conceptual ties between them, as they are “multi-faceted and both spatially and temporally variable (Graham and Howard, 2008, 6).” The starting point of my research was when I figured out that in spite of all the definitions we have, we still need to question our current perceptions of heritage which for the most part seem to reflect our objectual turn of mind. Although there exists a more recent but widely acknowledged agenda that simple concern for ‘things’, i.e., the physical body, wood, stone, etc., is not going to adequately transmit our sociocultural and spatial identity to present and later generations (Harvey, 2008), the struggle of reaching the same state of the art in the realm of practicalities is very real. This research, therefore, touches upon the challenges that reconceptualization of cultural heritage entails in terms of urban management, and seeks to cast light on a number of shortcomings as far as urban heritage management paradigms are concerned.

Although in recent years, more or less influenced by global ongoing debates, the views about heritage conservation have as well altered in Iran, I wonder if that has resulted in a solid domesticated perspective on it as of yet. This might sound like a clichéd image of the so-called developing world. However, the most fundamental problems around heritage assumptions appear to persist everywhere. Jaeger (2012, 88), referring to François and Schulze⁴ (2003, I, 10), states that in Germany it continues to be the case that the past is more of a burden one cannot escape from than a selection from “all that has taken place” to which one can actively reach back. Borrowing the terms respectively from Waterton and Watson (2013) and Byrne (2013), I believe in the era of “theories for heritage” and “counterheritage” the view that non-West need to be educated has to change. In my opinion, to rethink heritage from a non-Western view is the shared responsibility of all; simply because it provides the opportunity to study, understand, and address the issue in a real multifaceted challenge hardly ever tried before.

1.2.1. Scope of Research

I assume that the term heritage is a loaded one. It brings along extra weight, loads of judgment, or bias that plays upon the many variants of its authorized phraseology instead of helping with understanding its purpose. That is why it deserves careful handling and minding. So, I seek to dig deeper into the subject, because I think this problem is not specific to the case of Iran but applies to many if not all other cultural contexts, regardless of their governmental system, planning background, and even current state of their urban heritage assets. The relevance of my research to current heritage discourses, thus, is to rethink the prescribed standards of urban heritage beyond the local-global divide, and allow for a more precise understanding of how meanings of heritage are continuously reconstructed and institutionalized through everyday cultural practices. My study, on an empirical level, corresponds to the sustainable protection and use of cultural heritage in the context of global

⁴ the editors of *Deutsche Erinnerungsorte* in 3 volumes published by C.H.Beck

change. The research, by taking an interdisciplinary approach, centers on the appreciation that heritage values are to be protected and usage demands are to be supplied. It, moreover, explores what intangible qualities of a historic inner-city area could be, and promotes that acknowledging them in heritage policies could very well aid in both rehabilitation of that urban area and transmission of its cultural identity to present and later generations. Inspired by Gibson and Pendlebury (2009, 3), in addition to more abstract considerations of heritage meanings, the research also concerns and discusses to an extent the practical and grounded applications, contexts and outcomes of heritage.

1.2.2. A Brief Account of Tehran's Case

I base my thoughts on the case of contemporary central Tehran, more precisely five main neighborhoods left behind from old Safavid walled city. The historical center of Tehran was formerly a bustling area with many precious buildings of Persian style architecture from different eras. However, since the 1960s, it has gradually lost its attraction for many of locals and nonlocals because of not being compatible with necessities of contemporary life. Due to absentee owners and disinvestments, the consequent deterioration affected not only the quality of life in the city center but also its cultural identity. With the rapid and uncontrolled expansion of modern city toward outskirts, downtown experienced a massive outmigration of residents which resulted in peripheral relocation. With that, Tehran's historical center dropped into a downward spiral of urban decline, as it became less and less a matter of concern to the city. At the present time, due partly to the overwhelming intensity of modernization, Tehran is facing a crisis of cultural damage and with it the loss of identity, even though in particular the historic city center contains various worthy potentials. There still exist many precious instances of architectural heritage, e.g., Grand Bazaar and Golestan Palace, which are protected respectively as national and world heritage. But the area, which is known as heritage of Tehran, is at the same time one of the most distressed parts of the city nowadays.

1.3. Theoretical Positioning of Research

It would be inaccurate to claim that this research study steps in any specific theories in planning, urban, or heritage studies, but it does benefit from debates around several theories, and very likely comments about their perceived take on cultural heritage. The underlying theoretical grounds of my research could be encapsulated in three overarching thematic aspects or conceptual considerations; I) intangibility [as to what heritage], II) whose heritage?, and III) place and sociopolitical influences.

In this research, intangibility is understood as intentionality, it corresponds to being sensitive about meanings, it is all about focus. For me, meanings are more about meaningful qualities of heritage, tangible or otherwise, as it relates to people and their conscious act of creating pattern of thoughts that make sense out of things. Keeping in mind the usual objects of inquiry, it seems that intangibility as meanings does not resonate enough in the field just yet, despite the evolvement of heritage definitions. We still have difficulties in establishing a link between our more recent perceptions of heritage and heritage actuality in clear and concrete terms. But for many years now, it is widely acknowledged that heritage is not an object, it not anymore is an inherited resource or a product with social and political functions. Instead, heritage is "an act of making meaning in and for the present (Smith, 2006)." This statement brings time and of course the role of ordinary people onto the table, which leads me to the second aspect, the question of whose heritage or heritage to whom. Here, I focus on the discrepancies between the flow of culture itself and the ways in which different professional heritage practices act. When discussing heritage as meanings, those interpretations of it 'by people' and also 'with people' both would be highly relevant and important to the debate. Professionals cannot or should not simply impose their interpretations of heritage to people or into heritage deeds. Even they do so, it does not guarantee heritage protection in long term. Heritage has to be "something meaningful for people's lives

(Silberman, 2012)” to survive. That is only possible if it is remembered forward, most probably in changing forms and voices. As there is no universal way to embrace cultural heritage, I am aware that geo-cultural variations in the world ultimately make a difference in the debate I discuss. Thus, I consider the relationships of power, beyond the local-global levels, that shape the direction in which important decisions about most heritage practices are made in different places. However, in my research, there is another scale of place and sociopolitical influences involved and way more determinant, which is the scale of everyday. I look into the influence of historical public spaces on shaping the memory of the inhabitants and their everyday social practices, and discuss how it is different from the sole presence of some historical buildings within one specific place.

The Association of Critical Heritage Studies (ACHS), formed in the early 2010s, promotes a new way of thinking about and doing heritage, to look at it as an area of critical enquiry which should not be a globalized discourse anymore. 2012 manifesto of the ACHS reads “The study of heritage has historically been dominated by Western, predominantly European, experts in archaeology, history, architecture and art history. [...] The old way of looking at heritage – the Authorised Heritage Discourse – privileges old, grand, prestigious, expert approved sites, buildings and artefacts that sustain Western narratives of nation, class and science.” The association challenges scholars and researchers working in the broad and interdisciplinary field of heritage studies to “[...] question the received wisdom of what heritage is, energise heritage studies by drawing on wider intellectual sources, vigorously question the conservative cultural and economic power relations that outdated understandings of heritage seem to underpin and invite the active participation of people and communities who to date have been marginalised in the creation and management of ‘heritage’.” Following this logic line, with this research, I rethink the concept of heritage to not only understand it from a non-Western perspective but suggest that there could be a broader stand on the topic which bypasses the distorted notions of separate worlds within the world. I study spaces and places in the case of a historical urban area in Tehran, not to measure their heritage values in built environmental terms, but rather to grasp the meanings that they hold and could bring out anew for their people and communities. Within the context of cultural heritage, I am interested in the bonds between physical realities and their metaphysical grounds. Starting point for my research hinges on the proposition that there is no heritage value which is completely tangible and, moreover, the “tangible can only be interpreted through the intangible (Graham and Howard, 2008, 4).” I further this claim to argue that heritage conservation should become more about caring for the souls of things as opposed to simply safeguarding their bodies, if we wish to do something really effective and profound for keeping them up. I discuss why viability and vitality of any cultural heritage is in the long run dependent on its associations with people’s everyday life in the present time. I share some socio-spatial characteristics of my case study areas in Tehran’s historical center to illustrate, with the help of examples, that the larger part of any cultural heritage is always non-physically focused. And unlike its physical part which is specific and conditional, the nonphysical part is general and emotional and as such could come out at several depths of meaning-making intent. The deeper it goes, the simpler it becomes. The simpler it becomes, the longer it lasts. “Simple is stickier than complexity, and it survives (Meier, 2010).⁵” This is plainly to say that, as far as cultural heritage conservation goes, understanding and caring for the subtlety of the more basic levels of the intangibles matters the most.

1.3.1. Purpose of Research

This research study is generally focused on in-transition perceptions of cultural heritage and its correspondence with urban identity. It contributes to both fields of urban planning studies and cultural heritage studies by signaling that, in management of urban heritages, a shift from concern for things to

⁵ www.sourcesofinsight.com/simplicity-quotes

concern for cultures, traditions, and place-making seems urgent. I am inspired by and work on the concept of intangible cultural heritage while looking into historical neighborhoods in order to find and offer a deeper insight on some of the overlooked qualities that actually make up the character or essence of those urban areas. I like to classify them, more specifically, as qualities with some sort of nonmaterial nature or nontangible connotation, no matter whether they stem from tangible things or intangible things. The primary aim is to build up to a more flexible and less predetermined view on what should and what should not be considered as worthwhile when it comes to heritages of urban areas for their people and communities. The prime motive of this research is to learn from differences and connections, as opposed to being either fixated on the specifics or resisting them, with the commitment to stay away from becoming too keen on or too judgmental about universal theories on cultural heritage, in order to be able to maintain a clear sight for the beyond.

1.3.2. Research Questions

The question of how to plan “the future of the past (Semmes, 2009)” has been globally open to debate since many years, even decades. It is safe to claim that we will most likely never come up with some universal ideas on it. However, there has been more recently a growing trend toward alternative perceptions of cultural heritage with a fresh interest in the nonmaterial aspects of the matter. Such shift in the general view started to partly turn the focus away from the material past, and with that triggered off some debates around what matters more. Positioning itself in line with the latter reframing discourses, this research agrees that cultural heritage is not only about the past, though it was and could still be that too; it also is not just about material things, though it was and could still be that as well (Smith, 2006). Hence, this research calls into question the ways in which cultural heritage has officially been defined, ascribed, and managed so far. But instead of settling in the what-is-ness of heritage and taking it as given according to the normative blueprints, the research puts forward the question of what it really is, or what it could be at the core, or simply what it should be much more so seen as. So, with such a tendency to look inward, to understand and study heritage’s intangibilities, the very basic research question is:

- why intangibility matters? so far as cultural heritage goes, how perceptible is intangibility? and if it is of nonphysical character, how is that possible for it to be protected by physical means?

That expands on:

- what makes heritage of each community distinct from those of all the others as such?
- what constitutes heritage from the perspective of intangible components or immaterial assets, and how to address them in culture-led regeneration for (re)creating more authentic places in contemporary cities? and
- how understanding the meanings evoked by a historical city quarter can facilitate the right balance between a sustainable rehabilitation of the neighborhood and transmission of its cultural identity to present and later generations?

I use various sources to look at for answers. One of them is people/community’s viewpoints, in the case of Tehran, which make for my primary source for answering:

- how do the locals relate themselves to historical neighborhoods, and how could better understanding of their logic help in cultural heritage protection? or simply, what does their neighborhood (as heritage) mean to them? what are their experiences of resonance with it? and what is about it that is of value to them?

1.4. Research Methodology Overview

By going through an extensive literature review of pertinent references and also investigation into a case study, this dissertation is destined to indicate how the immaterial or intangible qualities of city’s heritage could be identified or recognized, and whether they could be measured by comparison with

certain standards. The research cares about investigating Tehran's case, through a descriptive analysis combined with the deployment of mixed method strategies. It largely uses a qualitative approach to data collection and data interpretation, but learns from "the model for integrating qualitative and quantitative data suggested by Kelle (2008): an 'understanding of social structures as both stable over long periods of time and in unpredictable ways still capable of change due to being the product of social action, which although oriented by structures is not determined by them' (Kelle, 2008: 76). This makes an interpretive process theory a prime choice for empirically and theoretically rich analyses of contemporary sociological phenomena (Baur and Ernst, 2011, 135)." Outcome of the research is alternative thoughts which could assist in seeking more culture friendly responses for reviving or recreating urban identity in contemporary conditions of cities. It seeks an interpretive analysis of city's cultural background and its current state in order to encourage a forward-looking management mindset for urban revitalization.

I started my research by selecting and reviewing the most relevant literature to serve as a solid base for the further phases. Based on an adequate knowledge of the case study⁶, I have gone through the most important texts to extract and set up the precise theoretical foundations. I have researched what means tangible and intangible heritage in neighborhood level of city, and what sort of literature is available on the different understandings of the local concerning place-making ideas. The theoretical debates that have been elaborated on are those of urban identity, built heritage, being/becoming (in) places, socio-spatial justice, cultural diversity/hybridity, and local/global perspectives on sense of place.

In the empirical part of my research, I especially go through places inhabited by people, i.e., the locals, on a daily basis, not those places where primarily attract tourists once in a while. Before the on-site research started, I have broadened my understanding of the vernacular ideology regarding public space and how it has been transforming since past till present. By secondary data collection and reading old, mid time, and new maps of the area and gathering descriptive information from available texts, I have built up into a better understanding of those features of public space in Iranian context which makes the place authentic, despite all the changes in form and so on. Afterwards, based on discourse analysis of place identity which is intertwined with spatiality and sociality, I have done primary data collection thorough observation and then the practice of mapping⁷ places as key tasks. Likewise, interviews have been conducted with experts working with local authorities, NGOs, designers of current and future projects, and residents of different socioeconomic standing have been consulted as well. More details on my field trip⁸, fieldwork methods, data processing phase, incorporation of the empirical results as well as concluding synthesis of the research findings follows, in the two last chapters. However, as I explain later on, my argument is not limited to Tehran. Rather, it is pertinent to at least the inner cities of many Middle Eastern countries with lived-in historical centers being mostly under vulnerable residential use.

⁶ I have lived in central Tehran for twelve years, before moving to Germany. For years, I have researched into the different aspects of several neighborhood areas, first as a student in university and then as an expert in profession. On Tehran, I have specifically been spending a long time studying five main quarters of old Safavid walled city, doing deskwork in order to navigate their changes from past to present as well as doing lots of fieldwork. Therefore, I have developed personal interest in the area, which is historical heart of the contemporary city.

⁷ Referring to Deleuze and Guattari (1987), Dovey (2009, 29) draws attention to the distinction between 'mapping' and 'tracing'. "The map is more than a simple 'tracing' of an existing form because it is infused with a desire to understand how the place might be navigated or changed."

⁸ I did my fieldwork for a timeframe of ten weeks from 27 April 2015 to 7 July 2015 in Tehran, Iran.

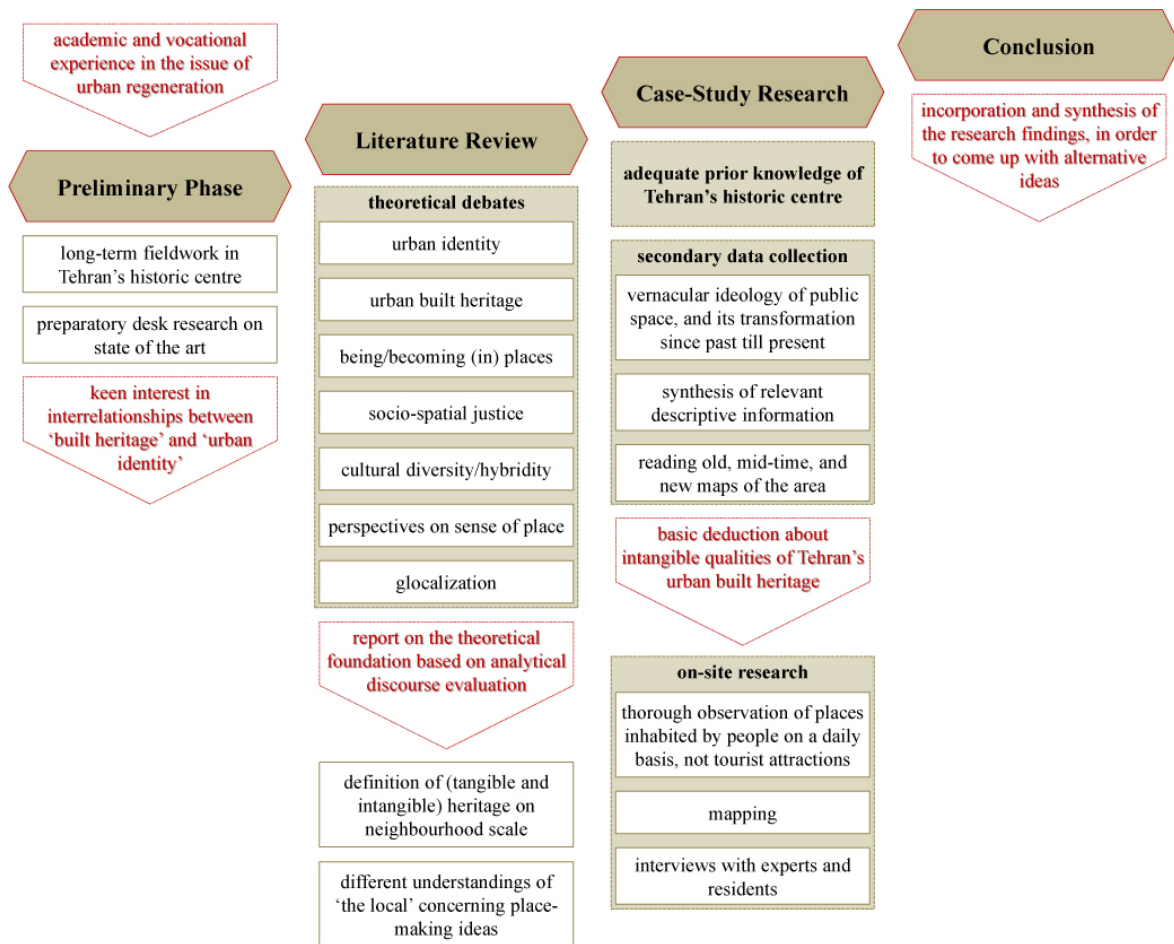


Figure 1: flow of the research process

1.5. Structure of Dissertation

'Chapter 1. Introduction' is an introductory segment opening onto my dissertation as a whole. I give a brief overview of what my research is about, sketch out the situation of my case study, and touch upon why it is relevant and worthwhile for my theme. Besides, I describe the methods which I use to conduct my research in general terms.

In 'Chapter 2. Reviewing Literature... What Is Heritage?', I work through heritage terminology, the theoretical background, and some practical records of cultural heritage conservation. It is intended to highlight a paradigm shift from the concern for materiality of the past to a concern for more profound connections with heritage as a cultural concept. I start with discussing how heritage discourse has already been paced, what it ended in as of now, and why it is time to stop and think it over. Moreover, I report on the case of Iran with regard to heritage at a larger scale of national policies and plans.

In 'Chapter 3. Redirecting Presumptions... What Really Matters?', I bring the thought of 'heritage as meanings' into my research discussion, in order to rethink former perceptions about cultural heritage and place identity. I mainly build on the debates around global versus local as well as diversity versus hybridity, and argue for a less dichotomous view. I address whether and the extent to which the idea of rethinking heritage would be nourishing if incorporated into the conservation policy and practice. I also introduce the case of Tehran with a descriptive and analytical tone.

‘Chapter 4. Neighborhood as Cultural Heritage’ focuses on the role of people, the potentialities of public spaces in historical city centers, and the ways in which they both vibe to maintaining ‘everyday heritage’ and with that upholding urban identity. This chapter also describes Tehran’s historical center, and provides a recognition of its cultural heritage, mostly but not only, from the locals’ point of view.

In ‘Chapter 5. Conclusion and Discussion’, the insights from all previous chapters are added up to bring the discussion to a conclusion.

2. Reviewing Literature... What Is Heritage?

2.1. Heritage Concept, Heritages Discourses

Looking it up in dictionaries, the common meaning and use of the word heritage⁹ defines it as an inheritance, referring to properties that are or may be inherited, things that come or belong to one by reason of birth, simply something which is patrimony or legacy. This definition does not lead to any serious disagreements or complications as long as the word heritage is not (implicitly) associated or (explicitly) combined with the word culture. But as soon as it is the case¹⁰, i.e. when it comes to mind as cultural heritage, which is in fact the predominant term of art today in the field, then its basic semantic meaning suddenly seems to fade away. The content of its meaning shifts, as it becomes infused with all the complex notions on culture, history, and the past. Heritage concept with that touch of culture is in itself, so to speak, kind of culture or of culture kind. Herein lies the roots of most discourses on heritages, because it could no longer be only about one sort of heritage to tackle. In fact, it becomes less about heritage itself and its supposedly self-evident importance¹¹. Rather, it comes out to be more about what heritage does¹². The uses of heritage, e.g., heritage as part of the present, heritage as entertainment, heritage as political legitimacy, heritage as consumer spectacle (Silberman, 2012), etc., take over conceptual discourses and alternately scale up the methodological discourses on heritage. That is not to say the debates on what heritage does or is used for necessarily clash with heritage concept, but rather to stress that “heritage has been confused if not debased by countless appropriations of the word for economic or political purposes, some of them decidedly unsavoury (Tunbridge in Onciul et al., 2017, 48).”

Heritage is widely believed to consist of our past, our tradition, and our memories. It, as the notion known today academically and vocationally, is a product of modernity that “emerged in response to the destabilizing effects of modernization, offering a temporal compass that could provide a framework of meaning within an increasing condition of spatio-temporal disorientation (Rampley, 2012, 1).” While competing discourses do occur, the dominant discourse of heritage, even now, “is intrinsically embedded with a sense of the pastoral care of the material past (Smith, 2006, 17).” It was born in the 19th century, linked to the development of nationalism and liberal modernity (Harvey, 2008), conceptualized as monumental constructions, ruins, fenced-off archaeological sites, and pristine landscapes. Such understandings pertain primarily to a European [particularly Britain, France, and Germany] conservationist and North American preservationist ethos and express Western-derived archaeological, art historical, and naturalist narratives (Alivizatou, 2012, 9). “The sense of the new Modern Europe was to be expressed in the monuments that were to be protected and managed for the edification of the public, and as physical representations of national identity and European taste and achievement (Smith, 2006, 18).” It was actually earlier in the 1790s that one began to speak of historical monuments and to conceive of a publicly shared cultural inheritance. But throughout the 19th century and into the early 20th there was a developing and increasingly sophisticated discourse of cultural heritage and monument protection across Europe. A crucial break occurred in the early 1980s, however, with a reflexive turn that made the idea of heritage itself the object of analysis. Two important publications can be regarded as markers of the shift in focus: Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger’s collection of essays *The Invention of Tradition* (Hobsbawm and Ranger, 1983) and Robert

⁹ ‘Erbe’ in German and ‘patrimoine’ in French

¹⁰ There are contexts in which the term cultural property may be more appropriate, e.g. in relation to cases where the point at issue is primarily the ownership of a cultural object, or other formulations such as cultural expressions or cultural goods and services.

¹¹ As Smith (2006, 13) puts it, “there is no such thing as ‘heritage’.” She challenges the idea that heritage value is inherent in things, and that physical objects or places must be preserved because of that. She forcefully demonstrates that they are used to give tangibility to cultural practices that underpin different communities and to assert and affirm their values.

¹² Smith’s analysis explicitly deals with the ‘work’ that the practices and performances of heritage ‘do’ culturally and socially. Furthermore, she considers the ‘work’ that heritage ‘does’ to be a result of the naturalizing effects of authorized heritage discourse.

Hewison's *The Heritage Industry* (Hewison, 1987). In contrast to the interest in heritage that emerged during the 19th century, heritage in the late 20th took on a new function as a key driver of the new postindustrial economy. Heritage became an industry in its own right. Hewison's concern with the intertwining of heritage and commodification has since become the basis of current critical heritage discourses, which have also subsequently expanded through engagement with linked phenomena such as tourism and museum and cultural management. In the more recent discourses, heritage, the central term of analysis, is also the one which is most under suspicion on account of its ideological, social, and economic functions (Rampley, 2012, 2-4).

There is a running debate over the applicability and sustainability of 'Western' perspectives on heritage conservation which have for long been employed in other parts of the world. The emerging field of critical heritage studies basically questions 'Eurocentrism' of heritage philosophies and methodologies which are, in a sense, imported and configured into various non-Western settings. In critical heritage studies, outstanding universal values and global approaches to conservation technologies that have framed the way heritage is valued and conserved worldwide, especially by UNESCO and its World Heritage Convention (1972), have been heavily criticized for being Western centric, exclusionary in nature, and lack of context sensitivity (Smith, 2006; Ashworth, 2011; Harrison, 2013). There exist two key issues involved when challenging the modern heritage movement¹³, which was developed in the context of a significant period of social change. First point of departure is the observation that "Europe itself is increasingly post-western (Winter, 2013, 542)." It appears to be both questionable and troublesome, painting everywhere in Europe and elsewhere with a single brush, if counting the diverse sociocultural histories in the Central and Eastern Europe¹⁴, in the Middle East, and simply in the globe. Secondly, the exponential growth of listed objects, places, and practices of heritage in the contemporary world brought about "the 'crisis' of accumulation of the past (Harrison, 2013a)". The latter issue, somehow, affirms the argument about the need for non-Western centric views on heritage, if one feels the threat of sameness in heritages.

2.1.1. from Definitions to Interpretations

Heritage is overall agreed upon to be understood as a thing which indicates part of the history of a land, nation, city, or some deeds of a group of people. This very general definition is unlikely to cause any major disagreements. However, when discussing individual cases, there might happen a clash of opinions rooted in some external factors, e.g., political, social, and economic situation. According to my expert interviews (I1), despite all varieties, definitions of the term heritage share a consensus in generalities of its content and the necessity of honoring it. However, there are various interpretations of cases and how-to approaches. Various interpretations of heritage, which coexist rather smoothly in conceptual level, very often come into conflict in policy or practice level. This can be explained through several grounds such as ideological preferences, political economy, benefits, etc. which beyond definitions push heritage ideas and ideals to fall in line with mass reality.

¹³ the European conservation movement and the American preservation movement... "What is revealing is what it was that early conservationists and preservations sought to 'save' in this context. Almost inevitably it is the grand and great and 'good' that were chosen, to 'remind' the public about the values and sensibilities that should be saved or preserved as representative of patriotic American and European national identities. Even when it is the 'bad' that is being preserved, it is very often the exceptionally 'tragic' event that is commemorated, rather than unpleasant that is more mundane or reflective of the general inequalities of human experiences (Smith, 2006, 23)."

¹⁴ Issues of heritage and heritage politics within Central and Eastern European contexts, as cases in the edited book by Matthew Rampley (2012) highlight, reveal the limitations of most heritage discourses as they have emerged over the past 20 or so years. In the introductory chapter, Rampley sketches some of the ways in which consideration of the specificities of heritage in Central and Eastern Europe throws up important challenges for mainstream discourses.

There are several ways of classification known in the heritage literature, among which the most common ones are those of cultural, natural, or mixed categories (as used in UNESCO's World Heritage List) and tangible or intangible cultural heritage (as introduced in UNESCO's 2003 Convention). Speaking of the latter, nowadays heritage could be anything really, tangible and/or intangible. Tangible heritages such as buildings and handicrafts have for so long been regarded as something appreciable, while intangible heritages such as customs and rituals have quite recently been acknowledged and introduced to the categorization literature. Moreover, objective visibility of a tangible heritage for example Persepolis¹⁵ - inscribed in 1979 on World Heritage List - makes it easier to be noticed and more likely to be cherished if at all; whereas an intangible heritage for example Nowruz¹⁶ - inscribed in 2016 on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity - is of subjective essence and mostly debatable due to complexities of its abstract nature tightly intertwined with a wide range of local traditions, myths, and practices which vary from place to place. The existing criteria for selection of the world heritage¹⁷, which have regularly been revised within the last four decades, not only reflect the development of the world heritage concept itself but with that show how classifications and inclusions of heritage sites have expanded worldwide. UNESCO's Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention (2017), first version of which published in 1977, is the main working tool explaining how to select proper nominations on the basis of a set of ten cultural and natural criteria. These criteria cover various considerations to clarify how a site of outstanding universal value might/should look like. Although this helps with marking and protecting natural and cultural heritage properties on the territory of those countries that have signed the world heritage convention, it seems to be more of a manual for fellow countries to claim their sense of pride internationally (Brumann, 2014). This pretty much is a reflection of one main limitation of the current framework by which UNESCO operates, which is its top-down approach to conceptualizing, spotlighting, and safeguarding heritages (Stefano, 2012, 231). As far as intangible cultural heritage goes, many critics notice that the concept of the intangible stands for more than dance steps, plot twists in storytelling, or any other examples of obvious events and actions (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998, 30; Smith 2006, 56; Stefano, 2012, 223). They remind that elements such as emotions, memories, and deeper or underlying values such as teamwork and generosity should also be placed within the concept of intangible cultural heritage, but they simply are not. The same point has been raised about the principle of significance, that stems from senses of belonging and dignity, which are excluded too. All these, however, are not to condemn UNESCO and its endeavors. Rather, in my opinion, propositions of this kind voice that it is too naive to rely merely on authorized approaches, while heritage expressions tend to be vastly diverse and nuanced that any one structure or activity could ever fully achieve safeguarding and sustaining them. We might as well give that up. Deployment of multifaceted strategies could of course be intended and realized, which at the very best appeal to a wider range of people and organizations, but yet definitely not all (Corsane and Mazel, 2012, 260).

Oftentimes the term heritage springs to mind as something manmade or built. Built heritage is conventionally perceived as constructed structures which reflect the society's historical and cultural background, either in general terms or simply due to their association with specific events and renowned people (Tunbridge, 2008). In this realm, significance has been one of the basic criteria when identifying and designating built heritages. In general terms, as a criterion it is supposed to examine

¹⁵ Founded by Darius I in 518 B.C., Persepolis was the capital of the Achaemenid Empire. It was built on an immense half-artificial, half-natural terrace, where the king of kings created an impressive palace complex inspired by Mesopotamian models. The importance and quality of the monumental ruins make it a unique archaeological site. [Source: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/114>]

¹⁶ New Year is often a time when people wish for prosperity and new beginnings. March 21 marks the start of the year in Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, India, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. [Source: <http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/RL/nawrouz-novruz-nowrouz-nowrouz-nauryz-nooruz-nowruz-navruz-nevruz-nowruz-navruz-01161>]

¹⁷ <http://whc.unesco.org/en/criteria/>

how special or one of a kind or worthy of attention is the item at hand; and very often it translates into age, rarity, monumentality, and so on. However, in several ways, significance proved to be a broad or vague concept in assessment processes. It could be argued that even if something is decided to be significant within its genre, it does not approbate underrating or simply neglecting other similar but less outstanding examples, only because one is already determined as heritage. Authenticity¹⁸ and identity, among others, fall in the same line as significance does. Such fuzzy and debatable concepts, have always been the backbone issues upholding heritage studies but at the same time exposing it to the dangers of romanticization and nostalgia¹⁹. Identity cannot be conceptualized on its own; it is even unthinkable to start regarding something as authentic, unless the connections with whom, when, and where are already found and well understood. A thing resonates with person X and might be authentic to them, but does not resonate with person Y and is not authentic to them. Adding the dimensions of when and where to such complex semantic relationships, it becomes harder and makes less sense to judge the authenticity or lack of it within the limits of official heritage systems. Questions like who determines authenticity, how, and with what objectives in mind need to further be explored. The importance of collective memory is another topic of high interest among heritage scholars. For the most part, these studies review historical evolution of an area through local narratives to capture and understand hidden or underrepresented heritages. However, there exist debates on whether collective memory opposes individual memory, how to evaluate the relevance of various groups, smaller or larger, and so forth. McDowell (2008, 40), for instance, names multiple types of memory: official, unofficial, public, private, collective, communal, local, national, societal, historical, emotional, postmemory, literal, and exemplary. Some speak of remembering as opposed to forgetting, and find them equally important and necessary, like “doing gardener’s work, selecting, pruning, [eliminating some memories] in order to help the others burgeon, transform, flower.”²⁰ While, others believe that “what is once done can never be undone and that, in fact, everything remains forever.”²¹

Aspects of Authenticity	Dimensions of Authenticity		
	Objective (real)	Constructive (sociopolitical)	Personal (phenomenological)
Time	“Historic Time”	“Heritage Time”	“Resident/Visitor Time”
Space	real and genuine, found in pre-modern locations, outside one’s own spurious society.	production (manufacture) of attraction, community, destination; enclavic space.	interactive, performative touristic space; heterogeneous space.
Approach	scientific and positivist paradigms.	constructivism and social constructivism; postmodernism.	interpretive and narrative approaches.

Figure 2: dimensions of authenticity (Jamal and Hill, 2008, 21)

¹⁸ Authenticity to Lowenthal, (1999, 5) is “an ancient concept of ever-changing meaning, functions, and criteria. In architectural relics and objects of art, heritage veracity has variously attached to materials and forms, to origins, to the fame or notoriety of the owners of such works, and to erosions and restorations.”

¹⁹ Nostalgia is not at its essence a negative feeling, though. It is our rather predictable reaction when we human beings find ourselves in an unstable present, dragged from the imagined glorious past, and heading too fast to some uncertain terrifying future. As British Pakistani novelist Mohsin Hamid (2017) puts it, “we seek to resist time. We rebel against it. We are drawn like lovers to the unreachable past, to imagined memories, to nostalgia.” He notices that nostalgia seems to be so attractive to us at this moment of history; it is a potent force in so many realms, from the most popular artistic products of entertainment industry to the most recent political rhetoric, ‘Make America Great Again’ to give just one example. Nostalgia becomes dangerous when it makes us resist engaging with the future, when it disables us from moving forward towards a new past.

²⁰ “Memories are crafted by oblivion as the outlines of the shore are created by the sea (Augé, 2004, 20).”

²¹ “Being has a memory. And thus even my insignificance – as a bourgeois child, a laboratory assistant, a soldier, a stagehand, a playwright, a dissident, a prisoner, a president, a pensioner, a public phenomenon, and a hermit, an alleged hero but secretly a bundle of nerves – will remain here forever, or rather not here, but somewhere. But not, however, elsewhere. Somewhere here.” Quotation from Václav Havel (2007, 330)

Graham and Howard (2008, 2) employ Lowenthal's (1998) present centered perspective on heritage and the idea of Halbwachs (1992) and Peckham (2003) on heritage as a form of present collective memory, to argue that "the contents, interpretations and representations of the heritage resource are selected according to the demands of the present [...] and an imagined future." McDowell (2008, 49-50) defines heritage as a 'political and often territorial' process, 'subject to contestation and malleable to the needs of societies and cultures in the present'. Gregory Ashworth (in Onciul et al., 2017, 51) takes a similar stand and calls it 'the contemporary uses of pasts'. John Tunbridge (in Onciul et al., 2017, 47-48) affirms that "heritage is the selective use of historical resources for contemporary purposes, be they economic, social or political. As such it is fluid, volatile and typically plural – even to the point of being specific in detail to every individual." He furthers the debate by pointing at "a schism in heritage literature and practice, whereby those who are most directly concerned with the preservation of past relics (undoubtedly a worthy pursuit in itself) persist in calling their charges 'heritage'." He notes that the term heritage is vastly used for the 'stuff' rather than the 'meaning of the stuff' (Warren-Findley, 2013, 381), and finds UNESCO and its various national level proponents the principal culprits in perpetuating this misunderstanding.

As definitions of heritage become increasingly fluid and wide reaching (Harvey, 2001), those interpretations of it as an inherited cultural product/resource with social and political functions (as discussed by Lowenthal, 1985; 1996) have lately been considered somewhat traditional [or limited] (McDowell, 2008, 37). Heritage is not what it used to be. This statement refers to the highly contested heritage terminology and its evolution over time. Notwithstanding the usefulness of taking up the subjects mentioned above and similar others, I think they are all subsets of the ways in which we position heritage as a matter of research. Solo-following any of them to frame a method for studying heritage, in my opinion, is not insightful and runs the risk of cracking apart the purpose of heritage in the first place. I elaborate on this in the next chapter. Heritage is not just about the materialities and even those intangibles (including: oral traditions and expressions; performing arts; social practices, rituals and festive events; and so forth) as if they are static legacies of the past, pure forms in need of guardians who could reemploy or reproduce them to fulfill our nostalgic desires. As much as this may sound counterintuitive, it is neither something to fulfill our nostalgic desires and then be passed on to the next generations in exactly the same condition we received it from our ancestors. On the contrary, "heritage resides in the here and now - whenever and wherever that here and now happens to be (Harvey, 2008, 20)." Heritages, either tangible or intangible, not only indicate the culture and beliefs of a group of people but also present them in ways which let other people get a sense of such internalized qualities within that particular group of people. This viewpoint regards heritage as community-sensitive values which take root and grow into many other things such as sociocultural customs and technical know-hows. Speaking of community-sensitive beliefs and values, it is a matter of fact that they, as elements of a culture, are dynamic and changeable forces which take different forms and redefine themselves and their relevance in the course of time. That being said, a heritage at times could actually be something which is no longer being used or practiced by people currently. However, its roots could still spring up and live anew as other manifestations vis-à-vis present time. "We desecrate the past both for its sake and for our sake. Neither historian nor layman is ever aloof or detached from it. To know is to care, to care is to use, to use is to transform the past. Continually refashioned, the remade past continuously remoulds us (Lowenthal, 2015, 1)."

2.1.2. Global Setting of Heritage Value Systems

"Modern international law relating to the protection of cultural heritage started in the period following the Second World War, the establishment of the United Nations (UN) and the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 1945, and the adoption of the Universal Declaration

on Human Rights (1948) (Blake, 2015, 4).” The normalized value systems, which experts around the planet feel dedicated to, have since decades been considered as the solid basis for determining what is heritage and what is not. Not to underestimate the advantages of knowledge transfer through international conventions and best practices, it has to be realized that such pre-established criteria and expectations inspire followers before thinkers. Practitioners, if interested, learn about and, if possible, act upon a sort of common sense which is promoted by the latest principles typically set in and for a Western logic. That is why, in spite of broadening concern of leading international organizations, e.g., UNESCO to embrace diversity of cultural heritages, it seems that, from recognition through nomination to ascription, world heritages actually loop to satisfy the same authority and audience. Josefsson and Aronsson (2016, 2093) warn that norms in heritage authorization “run the risk of [heritages] being standardized or typified to the extent that they restrict our own ability to find phenomena that attract us.” A flawed doctrine of heritage as a tangible and immutable ‘thing’ still predominates ideologies around the topic, and renders the value systems at work obsessed with ‘physical’ characterization of heritage items. That goes hand in hand with the association with objective expertise, obscures the subjectivity of heritage discourse, and leaves little room for protecting or preserving real values²², i.e., those which are not tangible, self-evident, or stereotyped (Smith, 2006, 300). At the same time, theoretical critiques of heritage practices often fail to account for the very real forces that align themselves with an immediate physical manifestation and display resistance to a gradual emotional journey - a symptom of “the widening gap between theory and practice, the thinkers and the doers (Ashworth in Onciul et al., 2017, 52).”

Smith (2006) speaks of the ‘authorized heritage discourse (AHD)’ which stretches back to 19th century and cultural concerns of European educated professionals and elites. She notes that this discourse “has been criticized, in particular by non-Western nations and commentators, for universalizing Western concepts of heritage and the values inherent within that”. She calls the 2003 ‘Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage’ UNESCO’s response to this and an attempt to recognize new and non-Western ways of understanding heritage. The interesting fact here is that, long before the 2003 Convention was adopted²³, the large majority of countries around the globe and their citizens have already been aware of intangible cultural heritage and concerned about the need to ensure its proper safeguarding. “For some countries, oral and traditional forms of culture represent not only the majority of their cultural heritage but also serve as a vital social and cultural resource (Blake, 2015, 151).” Besides, the imbalance of world heritage sites’ representativeness, which clearly prioritized Europe before every other continent, was an impetus for the international organization and its member states to seek alternative conceptualizations of cultural heritage (Alivizatou, 2012, 9). These all resulted in the acknowledgment of the need to employ a broader and more ‘anthropological’ notion of cultural heritage in the international protection and programs related to that heritage. However, in my opinion, this convention has ultimately been prone to fixate perceptions or preset expectations of what intangible heritages are supposed to be. One of the prime reasons is the fact that the essence of those so-called indigenous knowledges conjured up as an intangible heritage have to be broken down and put into some simplistic explanations in order to be understandable to a Western audience who usually gets to determine their relevance to the agenda, but may not be able to readily comprehend them. This means that the vast intelligence involved has to reduce to ‘information’ which could hardly ever reflect the firsthand experience lived by communities that brought such knowledge into existence. In short, it is correct to say that the internationally dominant paradigm of cultural heritage protection prioritized monumental ‘European’ cultural forms over local and indigenous ones.

²² “In the context of heritage, values are a vaguely shared set of intangible concepts that simply emerge from and exist in the ether of the communal public consciousness (Araoz, 2011, 58).”

²³ According to Janet Blake (2015, 151), “during the negotiation of the UNESCO’s Convention on the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972), Bolivia had proposed that its subject matter should include tangible and intangible cultural heritage as well as natural heritage.”

But even more so, “when it did address traditional culture, it did so from a heavily researcher-oriented viewpoint”, and Janet Blake (2015, 152) finds this to be the main ‘problem’ with UNESCO’s intangible cultural heritage. Hafstein (2009, 102) sees the UNESCO’s approach on the Representative List of intangible cultural heritage as a ‘beauty contest’ for cultural practices and beliefs. Brown (2005, 48) thinks that the list ‘has mistaken [heritage] for a map of the territory it represents’. Davis (1999) and Boylan (2006) believe the procedure of listing ends up ‘fossilising’ it and, thereby, rendering it meaningless. Michelle L. Stefano (2012, 231), referring to Hafstein (2009, 105) and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (2004; 2006), highlights that “at the core of any listing activity is the inherent process of ‘itemisation’, or ‘artifactualisation’. Specifically, the intangible cultural expressions that are, for whatever reasons, chosen for inclusion within the international lists and/or national inventories are subject to decontextualisation.” She considers new values that are derived from the nonlocal level to be threatening to the inextricable connections that intangible cultural heritage has with source contexts, including the interconnected relationships to those who embody it. “In essence, these cultural practices are recontextualised as ‘intangible cultural heritage’ through newly formed relationships to other listed items and, thereby, shift from being understood as local and specific to being viewed as ‘representative’ and universal.”

2.2. Cultural Heritage Conservation | How?

Gibson and Pendlebury (2009, 1) point at probably the most significant issue facing contemporary heritage management and policy. “If the socially democratic context for our contemporary understanding of value is one of pluralization, involving the validation of multiple conceptions of value, what does this mean for acts of preservation which are, by their very nature, based on processes which involve the fixing of meaning and value?”

A rule of thumb in most conservation policy documents is that they list a number of value categories based on which things are going to be selected for safeguarding. For example, issued in April 2008, English Heritage introduces four kinds of value relevant to conservation: evidential value, the potential of a place to yield evidence about past human activity; historical value, the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present - it intends to be illustrative or associative; aesthetic value, the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place; and communal value, the meanings of a place for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory (Benton and Cecil, 2010, 7-8). In other words, some values are intended to underline ‘intrinsic’ qualities that indicate the many ways in which the form of an object may stimulate the imagination, while some others are supposed to convey ‘extrinsic’ values which refer to associations with historical events, famous people or current practices. Having such a tailored checklist for measurement helps with, but at the same time, imposes an unnecessary restriction on the recognition step of the conservation activity. In addition, it tends to neutralize the innate call of any heritage on the list for taking a holistic approach to the actual conservation step. That very often leads to purely scientific techniques, even though the heritage item is literally of mental, conceptual, or spiritual rather than physical nature. Hence, conventional approaches to cultural heritage, like those recognized in the early ICOMOS charters such as Athens and Venice, are not as conventional as one might assume they are by now. Most heritagers are still operating based on passive evaluation and scientific intervention. Or, as Abu-Khafajah and Rababeh (2012, 71) suspect, while anthropological dynamic approaches to the past and its material are becoming more recognized and reflected for example in the latest ICOMOS charters such as Burra, Nara Document, and Ename, “post-colonial contexts are embracing conventional approaches in their top-down management of cultural heritage.”

Winter (2012) speaks briefly of a remark on Asia's philosophical traditions of impermanence, renewal, and rebirth. Pointing to the organic decay of building materials, e.g., wood, thatch, etc., he reports, Asia is claimed to be "less material centric, and thus places less emphasis on the 'authenticity' of original material fabric in the conservation process." Although I can, to a certain degree, confirm it too, as a fundamental cultural difference between even some regions of Iran²⁴ and the West, generalizing is of course both pointless and hazardous. Nevertheless, I do agree that philosophical traditions must be considered as the backbone of heritage studies, particularly when chasing after heritage concept in aged societies. I believe the true meaning, or philosophy, of things endure well beyond the death of certain objects, places, and practices which have previously been identified, preserved, and managed as heritage. I prefer to call it inherited mentalities which transmit through generations and come into being in various shapes, depending on and answering to the requirements of when and where. I am thinking of those hidden orders behind formation, because "it is not just the form that excites, but the experiences of meaning that forms carry (Alexander, 2008, 786)." Just to give an example, it has overly been written about the theory of four sacred elements: air, water, earth, and fire to be originally Persian. Regardless of the originality as to where it first belonged to, many Persian-style buildings, gardens, and also historical city plans have thoroughly been explicated to indicate the employment of this theory in their creation, from many points of view and in different scales. I do not intend to review, either functional or symbolic, how former Iranians, from laypeople, to scholars, to policymakers, etc., used to relate to the four elements theory in their daily lives. On the contrary, I question whether they are appreciated by contemporary society these days. I find it interesting to investigate whether and to what extent philosophies from this kind still live on or could be retrieved in 21st century everyday lives. This concurs with Harrison (2013a) who implies we will at some point need to reconsider what we have before named heritage, in order to realize if they are still or not anymore relevant, pertinent, or sustainable regarding contemporary and/or future societies. Along the similar lines, Iran pavilion (with the theme "Blending of Diverse Cultures in the City") in Expo 2010 Shanghai (with the theme "Better City, Better Life") exemplifies the difficulty in rethinking the accumulated past(s) for building our today and tomorrow. Aside from the storm of criticism from Iranian architecture and urbanism society, the pavilion happened to generate arguments among the laypeople, many against and some for the way it presented Iranian city and life. The pavilion looked like Khaju Bridge, the finest bridge in the city of Esfahan, built around 1650. Listening to non-experts' attitude is very thought provoking here, since it shows how they understand and feel about their cultural history. Although among professionals "authenticity appears to remain an ill-defined and puzzling concept (Jamal and Hill, 2008, 18)," it seems that local people have their own shared unwritten criteria for accepting things as authentic. A replica of the past architecture, some antique handicrafts, and other relics could satisfy foreign visitors, but would take the risk of sounding like a frozen-up nostalgic look of the past for locals. It is a widespread trend to seek for authenticity in heritage and via heritage conservation. The tricky part is sticking to the defensive approach which entails resistance to (re)creating and (re)experiencing, if we do not bother to stop and think deeper. "It [i.e., authenticity] denotes the true as opposed to the false, the real rather than the fake, the original, not the copy, the honest against the corrupt, the sacred instead of the profane. These virtues persuade us to treat authenticity as an absolute value, eternal and unshakable. Yet authenticity is, [anciently] in fact, in continual flux, its defining criteria subject to ceaseless change (Lowenthal, 1999, 5)." So, we need to re-conceptualize authentic heritage as ever-changing meanings, functions, and criteria. Then, it would help us to remember back and remember forward who we are. Recreating the architectural forms of the past might be symbolic, in the sense that those familiar-to-eyes lines and curves could bring back some pleasant reminiscences. But it is one thing to be inspired by that physical form, it is

²⁴ Using wood, thatch, etc. for construction used to be common in many parts of Iran many years ago. They were simply the most available local building materials back then. Although there are still many remains of those built structures, old materials and technologies have largely been replaced with new ones, specifically in urban areas. In general, I still see remnants of the traditions of impermanence, renewal, and rebirth in build industry of Iran.

another thing to hang on to it in the extreme of duplication. In short, by heritage from a non-Western view, I mean understanding the domestic underlying meanings of heritage things which have always been and are expected to reborn in new forms to make sense again.

Cultural heritage conservation seems to be a lot more about the question of how, trying to figure out what we have to 'do' to what we got from the past. It is rare to be the question of why, thinking about what it feels to 'create' what we want to be from where we stand now. This is to say that cultural heritage conservation has, mistakenly, been far too busy with historiography than it should be. To such an extent that it has been taken for something else than it really is, the art of being the conscious creator of the now. "To be is to have been, and to project our messy, malleable past into our unknown future (Lowenthal, 2015, 2)."

2.3. Roles and Controversies | Who?

One may argue that all heritages are 'invented heritage', and almost everyone is under the influence of this invention, as it is "inescapable and indispensable (Lowenthal, 2015, 2)." Harrison calls himself "a 'producer' of heritage in a number of different ways, as an educator, bureaucrat, researcher and private consultant, and even longer as a 'consumer' of museums and heritage sites (Harrison, 2013b)."

Paraphrasing George Orwell's much quoted comment: 'who controls the present controls the past', Harvey (2008, 20) underlines the control and use of heritage by official powers to not only serve the needs of 'presentness' but also cultivate a desirable future out of it. This could speak to an insight contrary to popular wisdom that "the future does not lay out in front of you. The future is something that comes upon you from behind your back, with the past receding away before your eyes (Persig, 1974, 417; as cited in Graham and Howard, 2008, 32)." However, what mostly takes place out there in the arena of 'doing' heritage far less allows the flow to osmotically find its path than it dictates turning points sporadically on the way forward. This has within different modern time periods displayed itself in multiple formations, putting forth variants of resistance, at times by turning head away from the past insistently and at others by holding on tightly to it. Either way, official heritages (just like non-heritages) have always been "present centered and are created, shaped and managed by, and in response to, the demands of the present. As such, they are open to constant revision and change and are also both sources and results of social conflict (Graham and Howard, 2008, 3)", or perhaps even more so, politico-economic battles. Blake (2015, 21), talking about the challenge facing international law in this field, finds it impossible to state one single approach to the protection of cultural heritage under legal system, simply because "the actors with an interest in the protection and safeguarding of cultural heritage are many and hold diverse interests and objectives in this process that, at times, collide (Blake, 2015, 21)." Another difficulty, as she exemplifies, is the wrong assumption that inscription of an element on the world-famous heritage lists automatically provides it with protection under international rules pertinent to intellectual property.

As Lowenthal (2015, 4) writes, "recognizing the past's difference promoted its preservation; the act of preserving accentuated that difference." Heritage studies have on paper gone far enough to acknowledge "the fundamentalist dogmas of preservationism, which still dominate most government agencies, nationally and internationally (Ashworth in Onciul et al., 2017, 51)." On the ground, however, things have not shifted as much. For example, it has been a while since the value of community involvement is stimulated intellectually. It is now widely known that communities enrich and deepen our understanding of the past in so many different ways. This take on community engagement and heritage, although challenging, as Onciul (2017, 7) highlights, "is currently in vogue, it is not passé. The need for meaningful engagement [nevertheless] remains, and deeper understandings of how it can be better conceptualised and improved are still required." A commonly (or even over-) used paradigm, which seemingly fits well into the discussion here too, is participatory

planning, since it emphasizes involving the entire community in the strategic and management processes. The problem is that such models are very often praised because they have been believed to be the right thing to do following the latest theoretical innovations, or simply because of appearing to be morally justified. But since the routine of application processes does not allow reaching for the deeper layers of understanding, after some time it is hard to distinguish between the initial brilliant idea and its distorted trendy version. Gregory Ashworth (in Onciul et al., 2017, 51) tends “to be suspicious of the term ‘community’, as it not only has multiple meanings but has acquired a sanctity, especially in the US, which renders it indisputable and unchallengeable.” John Tunbridge (in Onciul et al., 2017, 48) questions “the existence of single cohesive communities [...] not, however, to minimise the importance of community engagement. Rather, [...] would emphasise the need for heritage professionals to be constantly aware that their communities of engagement may well be plural even in small, apparently cohesive, situations [...] and are almost certainly plural in complex urban settings. Moreover, community engagement is a constantly moving target as communities and their values evolve, even in the ostensibly most traditional and cohesive cases.” Lining up with the aforementioned flow of thoughts, I do not intend to enter the current debates on community participation specifically and its relevance to heritage studies, instead look for a better understanding of communities’ endless journey of shaping and reshaping their cultural essence, and the possibilities which could be derived from that understanding for a more meaningful heritage practice. This seems to be a common rationale spoke of by the expert fraction of the community that people need to be educated about the values of heritage. People are often blamed for not caring about heritage preservation, or if they do, their concern not being nearly enough as what the experts would wish for. That is while the general political economy circumstances in most cases do not allow people to spread their wings freely and willingly. I agree with Amin and Thrift (2002, 131) that “we need to be normatively non-normative. That means, [...], an extension of universal rights in order to allow citizens to engage actively in politics. [...] it is an attempt to make a space for agonistic politics, where the democracy lies in the democratization of the terms of engagement.”

Even within borders of a country, specifically a large nation like Iran which brings together a variety of ethnic groups under one flag, the way in which the state structures ideological system of the country as a whole plays a significant role in how far certain ethnicities and beliefs or values associated with them get to become well marked or otherwise less bold. Taking a look at Iran’s national heritage list which originated in 1930s²⁵, one may argue that Pahlavi regime tried to highlight monumental heritages remained of Persian empire; while Islamic Republic regime distinguishes itself from its predecessor by caring more for religious heritages and yet in favor of Shia rather than Sunni Muslims or other minority religions. The National Heritage Protection Act of 3rd November 1930 provided fundamental legislative means in Iran for nominating, classifying, and listing national heritage sites, monuments, and craftworks. This law set the condition of being built or made at the latest till the end of Zand dynasty, i.e., 1795. Later in 1956, such time limit got eventually removed with listing Golestan Palace as a national heritage of Qajar dynasty. Decision makers of Iran’s heritage sector, within decades and always influenced by concurrent international norms of heritage categorizations, expanded national heritage list to likewise include intangible heritages, natural heritages, cultural landscapes, and vernacular heritages of earthen architectures and creative genius systems/techniques such as Persian Garden and Persian Qanat. However, the point here is that the designation of national heritages works as an instrument for central government to introduce and individuate itself; which is why, not only in Iran but everywhere, national heritages are chosen from things that maintain and thereby could grandstand the standards or ideology of the state. I elaborate on this later where I discuss how national heritages not necessarily represent local heritages as understood by locals.

²⁵ The very first national heritage of Iran, listed on 16 September 1931, is Sulaiman Tapa (or Zirzir Tapa). This ancient hill, according to Jacques de Morgan dating back to an ancient civilization called Elam (also known as Susiana) of around 2700 to 539 B.C., is today located within Iraq’s borders. [Sources: <http://www.ichto.ir> & <https://www.wikipedia.org>]

It does not seem like a controversial claim to say that heritage professionals - be their expertise in archeology, archives, buildings and monuments, crafts and movable objects, history, landscape, museums, or many other fitting specializations - play the biggest role in the conservation and stewardship of heritages. That is true to some extent and from a narrower angle of view, but not really if we start seeing heritage as values, that is to say, in a broader perspective. I understand this might sound odd to ears accustomed to listening to an analytical mind, which cherishes organized thoughts, believes in the importance of institutions and regulations, and is well reputed for separating issues and attending to them accordingly, e.g., tangible versus intangible heritage, cultural versus natural heritage, development versus conservation, and so on, just like impassioned views of right and wrong, good and evil, ownership and alienation, identity and entitlement, which theoretically tend to be overly certain, rigid, and lacking vitality. This recalls how Lefebvre describes Le Corbusier's urbanism and city plans as 'abstract and Cartesian' space, inevitably destructive of difference and thus also of social life. It does not catch me by surprise to hear, as stated in my expert interviews (I1), professionals believe that theorizing principles for assessing the values of for instance historical buildings is not what they [can] do, because such theories are to be found in relevant books and guidelines. On top of that, they are rarely given the opportunity to question the current stream of theories. These are totally fine and useful for all the right reasons, no argument here on that. However, the trueness of a worldview does not or should not shade other points of understanding, creating, and experiencing life and things in the world. Within Islamic worldview, for example, a holistic approach to the universe conceptualizes it as a profound blend of tangible and intangible things. From such holistic point of view, history, culture, and environment are inseparable, and so are the values associated with each and all. In such context, it is easier to get in tune with Gustavo F. Araoz²⁶ (2011, 59) when he discusses the role of local peoples and says "heritage professionals have never really protected or preserved values." However, there still remains other dissimilarities between the two archetypal views mentioned above and the conditions under which each are expanding in today's world, that recast the ways in which professionals and local communities are understood and counted in for heritage practice. One of those dissimilarities is the political system that governs the society in a more democratic manner or in a less democratic manner, and depending on where in the spectrum it stands, authorizes how and how far heritage management could allow for the official community participation. But identifying barriers such as political system is not the point I am trying to make here. Rather, by bringing forward the polarity of worldviews, I intend to stress it is about understanding that there are other points of view that could equally benefit one another. Even if they are far apart from each other in the ways they choose to perceive the universe and how it works, there is something really good for each and every one of them in accepting and appreciating others just as they are. This is forgotten very often, as most people have been holding a false premise that there has to be only some who know better and get to be teachers to the rest. In the context of modern knowledge, for the most part and heritage studies included, it has been the West who teaches, and would like the others to perform the way it would like to perform or it would like them to perform. This statement is obviously exaggerated and a little too harsh, but the point is there are plenty of things for the West too in realizing that contrasts are not to be fixed, they are to be embraced. Moreover, in my opinion, reaching this realization in conscious level does not do much, it has to be touched by the subconscious awareness of human beings who are so used to thinking and behaving based on conditioning and programming that has been projected on them.

2.3.1. Conflicts between 'Development' and 'Conservation' in Contemporary Cities

²⁶ President of the International Council of Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) from 2008 to 2017

As Gehan Selim (2017, 14) explains, “urban transformation of towns and cities during the 21st century has been intensely affected by flows of economic, social and technological operations”, in the name of development and what Michael Hebbert calls the ‘shock of the new’. The term conservation, as it is used today by heritage experts, has been popular in academic urban planning since the 1960s. Hossam Mahdy (2017), the author of *Glossary of Arabic Terms for the Conservation of Cultural Heritage*²⁷ with English equivalents, reminds us that the term conservation “was not known in pre-modern Arabic. There was no need for such a term because development was not divorced from conservation! Development was not about bulldozing or dynamiting old buildings for constructing newer ones. It meant building new structures as well as keeping what merited to be kept. On the other hand, conserving a significant building included making the necessary repairs, alterations and/or extensions. The binary oppositions of conservation versus development is a Western approach, which is not necessarily a globally valid one.” Similar to Arabic terminology, Persian tradition of architecture²⁸ understands development and conservation as intertwined concepts which go hand in hand and are part of the same process of (re)creating. However, exposed to inevitable influences from all over the world, first and foremost from the West²⁹, the current academic knowledge and professional experience in architecture (and urban planning/design) has substantively taken distance from the traditions of Iranian architecture. Seyed Mohammad Beheshti (2017, 12) points at the substantial differences between Iranian and Western architecture to clarify why more recent generations often encounter problems in reconciling the past architectural frameworks and the modern ones, and what has complicated the merging of the two. In his words, “this issue [of distancing from metaphoricality³⁰ to functionality] lets us consider our past architectural values irrelevant and cumbersome to modern life and creativity, even though we apparently honour those values and architectures.”

As David C. Harvey (2001, 320) observes “every society has had a relationship with its past, even those which have chosen to ignore it.” It is a matter of choice, by city’s co-creators and re-creators, deciding on how development and conservation are going to diverge or converge in every moment of time. Thrift (2008, 201) sees “the city as an object which has temporal extension into the future, rather than as a snapshot.” In his view, city consists of a myriad of partially connected processes going forward at different rates and speeds and across many scales simultaneously. In fact, the nature of cities requires them to always stay in a state of incompleteness, as it is never done, and there is no regression. Cities cannot cease becoming. They have an unconscious hunger for the future. But they also have a tremendous reservoir of the past, want it or not, they take themselves with them in every step forward. In Lowenthal’s words, “embraced or rejected, lauded or lamented, remembered or forgotten, the whole past is always with us (2015, 1).” It seems that, even within a Western approach, the separation between past and future, the duality of development and conservation, is nothing more than an illusion to ease a mind inclined to black-and-white certainties. However, not to be forgotten that it did not take long before the newest realizations suggested there has to be a sustainable balance maintained between the two. This once more recalls the cycle through which the expansion of human

²⁷ web-published by ICCROM in 2008 (https://www.iccrom.org/sites/default/files/2017-12/iccrom_glossary_en-ar.pdf)

²⁸ I do not agree with and therefore refrain from using the phrase ‘traditional architecture’, because it not only is often misunderstood and misused in referring to kinds of obsolete architecture but seems to suggest a misleading stress on the strict adherence to old methods and physical forms. I believe in the ‘tradition of architecture’, as tradition has always been accompanied by innovations, it updates itself, and is never stopped in some points of the past.

²⁹ Being involved in urban regeneration projects on neighborhood scale during my graduate studies and afterward in Iran, I have been investigating Tehran’s case as the archetype of problem at hand for years. As a result, I am convinced that the Euro-American model of heritage, with its focus on material aspects, is not sensibly applicable to contexts like Iran, with dissimilar urban planning background, and to consider the issue on a broader canvas, with radically different worldview. Besides, as stated earlier, the dominant Euro-American model of heritage has lately been criticized, challenged, and subject to transform (Smith, 2006; Harvey, 2008).

³⁰ He points out that there are fundamental differences between past and modern architectural principles with regard to design process, definition of creativity, and vision within which architectural elements are created. He beautifully describes how, in the poetic and imaginative view of Iranians to the space, each basic element (i.e., ceiling, wall, window, floor) plays a significant role beyond its function, as it carries the metaphorical meanings.

knowledge and the evolution of scientific theories usually take place. As Lowenthal (2015, 588-589) roots out the mindset behind many extreme developments, “the popular alternative to wallowing in the past is to dismiss it entirely. [...] Being up-to-date now not only matters most, it is all that matters; knowing or understanding the past is an impediment in the present rat-race.” But, a thinker never loses sight either of the body or of the inheritance of the past, even when imagining a radically different future. Coleman (2015, 125) wisely reminds us this exact quality of great thinkers when phrasing that “Lefebvre’s quarrel was not with civilisation or with tradition, but rather with the deformities wrought by capital in the modern techno-scientific age.” And that is why, I think, he should be looked up to by many more.

Planning professionals very often treat heritage conservation and urban development as opposites, while latest theories say that they should be regarded as equals, not only that, but as supplementary aid one for the other. One of serious contradictions between the two could easily be identified when dealing with an old quarter of city, suffering from the problem of insufficient traffic accessibility and permeability. This problem usually turns out to be a major one, since it itself raises other social and environmental difficulties not only for close by areas but also for a much larger part of city or even sometimes the entire city. As long as there remains the problematic situation, such an aged neighborhood is most likely, or at least the case study of this research is, inhabited by lower income and socially vulnerable groups living in unsanitary conditions and high-risk housing. As a result, it does not appeal to investment activities and forward looking urban intervention practices due in part to uncertainty about the success and profitability. However, according to the principles of heritage conservation, urban fabric of the neighborhood is generally considered worthwhile for preservation. It is classified as the built inheritance from the city’s past which needs to be protected as a whole. Thus, on the one hand, the historical access network requires to be redefined mainly by retaining those narrow pathways within the densely compact texture and deploying them as the basis of any change. On the other hand, it is highly essential that the structural order of public spaces in the neighborhood area get revitalized. Either way, there are other needs to be met, for instance, the demand for more public parking lots for residents and above that to have open and green spaces expanded as well as public services with regard to land use. Speaking of challenges the contemporary urban intervention practices face, I believe, we planners need to question our current perceptions of heritage and sustainability, first and foremost. Despite all the ongoing and widely acknowledged theoretical debates on socio-spatial dimensions of heritage and socio-cultural aspects of sustainability, it seems that we have not yet shifted our attention to those nonmaterial spheres of the issue in an adequate empirical way. Actually, the situation we have to deal with is initially confusing itself, and this poses a big challenge to the management of many historical cultural urban areas, particularly in so-called developing countries. On the one hand, our origins cannot be limited to physical bodies of some old buildings scattered around the inner city (Zukin, 2010), for even those appropriate or worthy selections cannot be kept or frozen forever after all. On the other hand, concerning the latest sustainability principles, we are now required to go beyond environmentally green and economically efficient planning strategies. Then if we agree on these more profound viewpoints, we should wonder what constitutes heritage which we protect and whether a better understanding of it would retain the dichotomies the same or not.

2.3.2. The Case of Iran

At this point, I would like to expand on the regional focus upon which I base my thoughts, because I am aware that, after all, there is a correlation between the geo-cultural variations in the world and the perceptions of the beholder on any given topic. I am primarily discussing the inner cities of the Middle Eastern countries, specifically Iran, with lived-in historic centers. Those Mideast cities, in several aspects, differ from their Western counterparts, mostly because lived-in historical centers as such do

not exist in most of the Western world anymore. Generally speaking, to give only one example of several probable scenarios for those city centers I refer to, the dominance of larger scale services in close proximity to vulnerable residential uses has caused problems often acknowledged but which cities are not able to do much about. I talk more about this in chapter 3, on the particular case of Tehran. While, this subchapter provides an overview of management system and national regulations with regard to cultural heritage conservation in Iran. I introduce the main actors of heritage's managerial body, and draw a mental picture of how heritage related policies and plans have evolved at a macro level in the country. My critical review is targeted at the years between 1979 and 2015, but before that I briefly touch upon some earlier times.

Iran as one of the oldest ancient civilizations in the world is a country which enjoys a great legacy of cultural and natural heritage resources spread throughout its periphery. Heritage studies, as a theorized discipline of its own, in a universal scale, does not have much of a history any longer than a couple of decades or so. However, practicing heritage conservation itself could be traced back to 18th century Europe. In Iran, the very first advent of the word heritage in public opinion and legislations dates back to 1870s, short after the return of Naser al-Din Shah, a king in Qajar dynasty, from his travel to Europe. Influenced by European museums and historical buildings, he ruled on the construction of a museum in the garden of royal citadel comparable to those Western counterparts. This implies that, no matter how heritage concept has later evolved in Iran, it was actually triggered off as an imported idea from Europe, offering to museumize as close as possible to alien standards and outstanding universal values. Afterward, this start developed into a dominant way of running heritage practice, with a desire of using the past to claim outsiders' admiration. This trend to cherish and (blind-)follow incoming thoughts accelerated step-by-step after the return of Iranian graduates from abroad which coincided with modernization boom all over the globe. For many years now, in Iran, the National Heritage Protection Act (1930) provides fundamental legislative means of heritage sector in order to nominate, classify, and list national heritage sites. Besides, according to the Law Concerning the Acquisition of Land, Building and Premises for Protection of Historic Properties (1969), they may further transfer into government's property ownership. So, one could say that attempts to identify national traits have become established in Iran since about a century ago.

Smith (1998, 74) argues if the West is generally characterized by a state-to-nation trajectory, that of Eastern Europe and parts of Asia can be more convincingly analyzed in terms of a nation-to-state model. I could endorse this statement, because a nation-to-state model does prevail, as far as Iran is concerned. The following is a report on what I find to be the power dynamics that manage cultural heritage conservation in contemporary Iran (1979-2015). For this section, in addition to my desk research on secondary data resources, I make use of semi structured interviews I conducted with a number of experts and national/local authorities involved in Iran/Tehran's heritage management. Throughout the text, in order to depict a more apparent image of the evolution, I look at and talk about some examples of practices by main bodies of cultural heritage conservation and urban development planning. Among numerous bureaucracies involved, three main administration and operation agencies are chosen to be analyzed in terms of their experiences in practice. They include: Iran's Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization (ICHTO)³¹, Ministry of Roads and Urban Development (MRUD)³², and Tehran Municipality which works in close conjunction with Tehran

³¹ Iran's Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization (ICHTO). This is what the organization has been called since 2006. For decades now, this governmental institution has been known as the highest ranked organization of its kind in the country. It has branches in all provinces of Iran, a total number of 31 as of today, that administer heritage sites and museums, and operate local projects.

³² Iranian Government currently has 18 ministries. The structure of the ministry currently called Ministry of Roads and Urban Development (MRUD) has frequently transformed since its inception to accommodate national requirements. Its history dates back to 1919, during the reign of Naser al-Din Shah, when the Ministry of Public Works was established for affairs related to construction of roads, bridges, and road maintenances. Skipping prior administrative changes in titles, missions, and responsibilities of many

Construction Engineering Organization (TCEO). I identify six time spans within the time period 1979-2015. The divisions indicate notable transformations of policies and plans which resulted in the advent of different eras of cultural heritage conservation in Iran. In general, to distinguish the changes in both theory and practice, I simultaneously consider:

- major events in the scale of country and heritage sector,
- significant structural changes such as the assignment of ICHTO head,
- long term policies³³,
- five development plans³⁴ of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and
- management level regulations³⁵, for those parts I talk about the specific case of Tehran.



Figure 3: major events within the time period of 1979-2015 in Iran

1979-1986

In 1986, Iran's Cultural Heritage Organization (ICO) was established. It took place seven years after the victory of Islamic revolution in 1979³⁶, and two years before Iran-Iraq eight year long war ended in 1988³⁷. Both revolution and war had huge impacts on social, political, and economic conditions of the country. First, the victory of Islamic revolution resulted in reconfiguration of sociocultural values; second, the imposed war made it necessary that the country's priorities change. In the years during and following Iran-Iraq war, most of the resources were spent on war expenses and to supply very basic needs of people. Therefore, in that period, there existed no conservation plan and almost no investment in heritage sector. Simply because at the time there existed many other crucial necessities to be addressed, heritage conservation was regarded as more of a luxury matter and not needed. In addition, as many foreign experts who used to work for heritage left the country, things got more difficult partly due to lack of human resources. After Islamic revolution of Iran, National Organization

governmental bodies, almost a century fast forward, in 2011, the Ministry of Roads and Transportation was merged with the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, leading to the formation of the Ministry of Roads and Urban Development.

³³ i.e., 20-Year Perspective Document of I.R.Iran (2003), and Regime's General Policies in Urbanism Sector (2011)

³⁴ i.e., Laws of Economic, Social, and Cultural Development Plan of the Islamic Republic of Iran; the 5-year medium term national development plans of the country formulated by the current government and approved by the Islamic Consultative Assembly of Iran (a.k.a. Iranian parliament)

³⁵ i.e., Comprehensive Act for Management and Conservation of Tehran's Historical Context and Buildings (2012), The Draft of Urban Management Bill (2014), and Tehran's Vision Act for the Dawn of Year 2025

³⁶ Islamic Revolution's Victory Day in Iran: February 11, 1979

³⁷ Iran-Iraq War: from September 22, 1980 to August 20, 1988

for Protection of Antiquities which was previously in charge of cultural heritage conservation in Iran had to disband. As a result, between years 1979 and 1986 there was no responsible organization for monitoring and looking after Iran's cultural heritage. In addition to the heritage regulations of the previous regime which were still valid, only some regulations got approved by Revolution's Council in order to prevent excavation in historical sites and stealing or moving ancient relics out of the country. Aside from that, due to exceptional conditions of the country caused by Iran-Iraq war, other and more profound aspects of protecting heritage values received very little or even no attention.

1986-1992

As mentioned above, ICO was established in 1986. By legislation from the Majles³⁸, eleven research and cultural institutions which were before under either the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance or the Ministry of Culture and Higher Education merged into one and formed ICO; and the Ministry of Culture and Higher Education was assigned with legal supervision of this newly established organization. However, the first head was assigned only two years later in 1988 when the country was just left with the whole consequences of a lengthy war.

The establishment and existence of ICO was a milestone in Iran's heritage conservation sector. The basic responsibilities defined for the organization included:

- a) overseeing numerous associated museums and palace complexes,
- b) administering many educational and research institutions, and
- c) carrying out projects in conjunction with academia and also foreign partners.

Formally published goals, outlook, and statute of ICO indicate that the focus of this organization was expected to be on: research, recognition, and documentation; all in order to build knowledge over Iranian national heritage, make it accessible to people, and increase public awareness. In terms of ideology, it could be inferred that heritage of religious architecture related to after-Islam era were intended to get more attention; in comparison to Pahlavi regime who paid more attention to architecture heritage of pre-Islam era. Anyhow, the establishment of ICO bolstered research on cultural heritage in Iran; and thereby, provided a scientific base on which management of heritage conservation started to care beyond merely physical measures and act more culturally aware.

Within the scope of ICO's objectives, there were some other levels of deeds such as: enhancing heritage management structure, developing legal and economic system regarding heritage, encouraging public participation, and including private sector in the conservation process. However, these have less seriously been taken into action. Moreover, ICO sought means to promote consideration of heritage conservation among senior government bureaucrats. Ministers and head managers of other state organizations in any way related to cultural heritage got invited to some informative events held by ICO and visited some heritage sites. They got informed about the importance of cultural heritage and the necessity of expanding conservation practices to the circle of their own ministries or state organizations. This resulted in building some regulations and plans for heritage conservation outside competence domain of ICO. Another attempt was holding scientific conferences in universities and higher education institutions, as for example Seminar on Sustaining Life in Old Fabric of Iranian Cities which took place at Iran University of Science & Technology in 1988.

While at the same period of time³⁹, Municipal Fiscal Self-Rule Act was introduced and put into action. This policy cut the national budget allocation for large municipalities in a span of four years (1988-1991). The aim was to save central government outlays for social welfare. However, it became a

³⁸ Iranian parliament, currently called Islamic Consultative Assembly of Iran

³⁹ marked with the termination of Iran-Iraq war; decline of oil revenue; and the office of Gholamhossein Karbaschi, a reformist politician, as the mayor of Tehran 1989-1998

challenge for municipalities and just after a decade proved to be one of the most destructive laws for cities like Tehran. Prior to revolution, central government contributed 55% of the municipalities' budget. By mid 2000s, this dropped to 10%. This cutting down the state financial support for cities, in name of self-sufficient municipalities, without defining a replacing source, resulted in, as talked about by local urban analysts, "selling the city" or simply trafficking the urban density⁴⁰.

In short, starting in 1986, ICO was given a supervisory position to fill the legal gap for supporting heritage assets of Iran and Iranian cities. As stated earlier, its activities were focused more on the research aspects to be strengthened. Still, according to its statute approved in 1988, the role of ICO in urban planning included:

- a) preparing and implementing plans for preservation and renovation of valuable cultural historical monuments, buildings, and complexes,
- b) assessment and commenting on all development plans, e.g., comprehensive and detailed plans of cities,
- c) preventing demolition of heritage areas, and
- d) determination of buffer zone for heritage sites as well as codification of certain regulations for urban and architectural design within such buffer zones.

However, in practice, the organization managed to fulfill a less wide array of tasks restricted to buildings restoration and archeology studies; and due to a number of inevitable reasons, it took some years for ICO to reach a higher level of competency.

By 1989, Laws of the 1st Economic, Social, and Cultural Development Plan of the Islamic Republic of Iran (1989-1993) got approved. It basically targeted for the country to survive out of the war crisis. Urban land planning policies focused on reconstruction and empowering cities based on their basic needs. Actually, they were more concerned about providing schools, culture and arts centers, and sport and health services. While obeying the 1st development plan, Office for Improvement of Urban Context⁴¹ at the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development was assigned to work on revitalization of historical urban neighborhoods. In 1990, Esfahan, Kerman, Tabriz, Shiraz; and in 1991, Hamedan were announced as main cultural historical cities of Iran. Thus, there happened a couple of limited experiences for improvement and revitalization of their urban contexts. Specifically, projects entitled Cultural Historical Axis were defined and carried out for each of those main cities.

1992-1997

By 1992, ICO stabilized its institutional and legal state. However, some important changes happened in 1993 which influenced its capacity: first, with the start of 6th presidential cabinet, "reconstruction era" began; and second, ICO separated from the Ministry of Culture and Higher Education and joined the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance. The initial change meant to heal damages and destructions caused by the war, and eliminate the ruins by implementing reconstruction projects. The latter change actually played a key part in shaping the future route of cultural heritage management in Iran. Previous affiliation of ICO to the Ministry of Culture and Higher Education generated a prominent passion for research at the organization. That passion weakened by attaching to the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance; as the new supervisory approach demanded a higher rate of heritage utilization with more attention to economic aspects, rather than cultural aspects of heritage.

⁴⁰ As of 2014/15, 75% of Tehran's municipal budget came from issuing construction licenses and, if applicable, charging "extra density" fees

⁴¹ already existed since 1985 under the Deputy of Urbanism and Architecture at the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development; later in 1997, was established officially as Urban Development and Revitalization Organization in the framework of a subsidiary company of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development

However, of course, any utilization of heritage still had to be based on and in respect to value criteria known and recommended by the outcome of research on individual cases.

In 1995, Laws of the 2nd Economic, Social, and Cultural Development Plan of the Islamic Republic of Iran (1995-1999) came into effect. It was more concerned about infrastructure and fundamental economic development with focus on agriculture, trying to reduce the economic dependence on oil income and increase non-oil export. This development plan was a turning point for revisiting urban historical contexts, by both ICO and the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development through its Urban Development and Revitalization Organization. ICO arrived at a multidisciplinary approach considering different scales of heritage conservation, i.e., not only monuments and buildings but also historical sites, villages, and cities as whole units. As a result, some major projects were defined and later on entitled Cultural/World Heritage Base of specific heritage units; as for example: Persepolis-Pasargadae World Heritage Base, and Masuleh Cultural Heritage Base. These research bases were established as management and conservation offices responsible for the investigation, conservation, restoration, reorganization, and presentation of each certain heritage unit. Concurrently, a research institute was established at ICO with regard to cultural historical axis and contexts. In addition, since the 2nd development plan set the goal of paying attention to historical contexts in urban development policies and plans; the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development defined several projects for improvement and revitalization of urban historical contexts, some of which ended with the implementation phase and some others terminated at the study level.

The 2nd development plan called for improvement, renovation, and reconstruction of “problematic urban contexts” along with conservation of the identity of valuable areas⁴². Accordingly, municipalities were supposed to act on this demand while following rules and regulations of Iran’s Supreme Council of Architecture and Urbanism. The same development plan also asked for providing affordable, i.e., rental small unit, housing in cities. What was practiced in reality was not always as appealing from a heritage point of view, though; since most of the projects turned to be more in favor of radical urban development rather than heritage conservation.

In theory, there happened a shift from restoration of single buildings to revitalization of historical complexes, urban contexts, cultural historical axis, and historical center of cities as an integrated entity and in relation to the city structure. However, in several cases and in name of eliminating urban blight and decay, such decent mindset actually resulted in aggregation of urban lots by demolishing historical neighborhoods, as in Navab Regeneration Project in central Tehran. Navab street was originally an old North-South street linking several well-defined neighborhoods in central Tehran, which used to enjoy strong sociocultural and physical cohesion. It used to play a vital role in central Tehran within the last 70 years before implementing the large-scale project (reconstruction of old houses to medium and high-rise buildings and construction of a new highway) which later proved to be a big failure. The autocratic regeneration project was implemented in 1990s by Tehran Municipality as a mega scale urban development project. It was at first more about construction of Navab highway⁴³; and then for the municipality to afford the costs, it turned to a mass housing project with obligatory involvement of people via a top-down process. The project, which was decided and controlled in a closed system and imposed on citizens, years later proved to be a complete failure from different aspects.

⁴² As Jaeger (2012, 73) describes, the Nazi program of ‘Altstadtgesundung’ (‘Cleansing and Recovery of Old Town Quarters’) was introduced in 1933 based on ideas from the movements for environmental protection (‘Heimatschutz’) and urban hygiene (‘Stadthygiene’). The ambiguous Nazi term *Gesundung* assumed a state of disease in the body of the city – the old town as the focus of disease. But *Gesundung* also aimed at a political, social and moral cleansing. I find similarities between that approach and the way, for quite some while, historical neighborhoods in Tehran have been regarded as ‘problematic’ and even publicly labeled as such by city authorities, even though they tried to sugarcoat it with the slogan of urban identity protection.

⁴³ included in the first comprehensive plan of Tehran (1968) and reconfirmed in the revised comprehensive plan of Tehran (1992)



Figure 4: Navab Project, the demolition site (left), under construction (middle), the built-up corridor (right)
[Source: Bahrainy and Aminzadeh (2007)]

While on the subject, it has to be stated that some successful projects were also experienced during 1990s and later 2000s; as for instance, Rehabilitation of Tabriz Bazaar which in 2013 was one of the winning projects of Aga Khan Award for Architecture. According to the jury, it displayed a remarkable example of stakeholder coordination and cooperation to restore and revitalize a unique structure. The management framework was based on the participation of the bazaaris, together with municipal authorities and Tabriz Bazaar Base.

1997-2004

Laws of the 3rd Economic, Social, and Cultural Development Plan of the Islamic Republic of Iran (2000-2005) came into effect in 2000. Following this set of laws, ICO got included in the cycle of planning management and could somehow claim its legal rights and was given voice. Head of ICO became a member of Iran's Supreme Council of Architecture and Urbanism; and its representatives became members of Commission Number 5⁴⁴ in Tehran and other large cities.

The 3rd development plan emphasized on integrated urban management with an interactive approach on conservation and development. It instructed revitalization projects to be economically profitable, by promoting the idea of redefining the function of historical buildings with economical reasoning. With this regard, attention to social capital and people's participation in ICO's plans was also stressed. In short, the 3rd development plan was the starting point of a new approach towards built heritage and uplifting the culture of heritage conservation in Iran.

A valuable experience with this regard initiated in 2000. The idea was defined as regeneration and exploitation of historical buildings changing their function to restaurants, hotels, and similar uses. The funding was provided for two years by a legal note that 5% of the taxes on cement industry had to be passed on to ICO for this purpose. Later in 2002 with termination of the funding period, ICO decided to continue working on the unfinished projects anyway by means of its own limited budget. This plan was called Pardisan Project at the time, and remained with ICO for a couple of more years till some incidents changed the procedure. Pardisan Project was successful, especially long term wise, in revitalizing the historical neighborhoods in which single rehabilitated historical buildings were located. In the years following enactment of the 3rd development plan, generally speaking, Iran's cultural heritage conservation made a big step forward. Also, heritage awareness increased among people and in the society.

In 2004, once more a structural change happened. Iran's Cultural Heritage Organization (ICO) separated from the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance and together with Iran's Tourism Organization formed into Iran's Cultural Heritage and Tourism Organization (ICTO), under direct

⁴⁴ Commission Number 5 reviews and approves urban detailed plans and decides on any subsequent changes in those plans.

supervision of the president's office. The advantage of this change was that the head of organization was now vice president; but the downside was the pressure to become more political and concerned with economic development, rather than cultural and social. Besides, the focus of the organization had to split between cultural heritage conservation and tourism development.

2004-2013

Starting in 2004, ICTO continued its endeavor to protect cultural heritage of Iran with more attention to tourism goals, more specifically recreational tourism rather than cultural tourism. In 2005, Laws of the 4th Economic, Social, and Cultural Development Plan of the Islamic Republic of Iran (2005-2009) got approved and came into action; while emphasizing on the way of heritage conservation which serves for tourism development.

The 2003 Bam earthquake in Kerman province of southeastern Iran with a shock of 6.6 moment magnitude was so destructive, by which nearly 60,000 people were killed or injured. The effects of the earthquake were exacerbated by the use of mud brick as the standard construction medium; in addition, as many of the area's structures did not comply with earthquake regulations set in 1989. So, the government was required by the 4th development plan to start reconstruction and renovation of old fabrics in other cities and villages; and retrofit existent buildings against earthquake. This policy resulted in preparing Comprehensive Housing Plan, which increased construction of mass housing even more than before, one of them being the colossal failure known as the Mehr housing scheme⁴⁵. The Ministry of Housing and Urban Development started buying properties in "distressed and inappropriate" contexts to execute development projects.

Obeying the 4th development plan, in 2005, Revitalization and Utilization Fund for Historical Cultural Buildings and Places was founded as a nonprofit institution affiliated to ICTO. The aim and main duty of this institution was to grant licenses for proper exploitation of historical cultural buildings and places. Actually, this was meant to continue Pardisan Project, but outside the body of ICTO and by investment of domestic or foreign private sector.

In 2006, another structural change happened. This time, Iran's Handicrafts Organization got separated from the Ministry of Industries and Mines and joined Iran's Cultural Heritage and Tourism Organization (ICTO); and formed Iran's Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts, and Tourism Organization (ICHTO). During this time slot, i.e., between 2004 and 2013, the organization experienced several times change of its head manager. And even in 2009, the headquarter office moved to Shiraz and Esfahan, but moved back to Tehran after only two years. Furthermore in 2009, a law came into force that owners of the properties already registered as national heritage, could deregister their property by a legal sentence of the Court of Administrative Justice. This, of course, scarred the image of ICHTO severely in the eyes of both society and management bodies. All these simply show how unstable was heritage sector during this period, which degraded reputation and liability of its highest ranked organization in the management system of the country. Although there happened an increase in the quantity of Iran's UNESCO heritage listing (of tangible, intangible, and natural heritage), there was not really much progress in quality and long-term achievements.

⁴⁵ designed and launched in 2007, the project sought to enable homeownership for the economically "oppressed". The Mehr system offered developers free government land to build affordable housing units for first-time owners. Since most citizens have difficulty getting small bank loans, homeowners who signed up for Mehr housing were given 99-year mortgages guaranteed by the state. Banks acted as intermediaries between developers and the government, and the Central Bank of Iran was instructed to print more money to pay for the scheme. Billions were pumped into the economy to erect 17 new cities in barren deserts and some 1.5 million readymade housing units. Problems regarding lack of utilities have been reported for the project, including lack of access to water, power, gas, and sewerage lines. President Hassan Rouhani, in office since 2013, announced that the Mehr housing scheme is one of the largest hurdles to Iran's economic recovery.

In 2011, Laws of the 5th Economic, Social, and Cultural Development Plan of the Islamic Republic of Iran (2011-2015) got approved and came into action. According to it, policies regarding citizens' share in municipality's income should change from taxes for issuing building certificate to taxes for urban public services and also taxes for added value of lands and properties as a result of implementation of urban development plans. Besides, providing infrastructure for urban development and transportation should be the government's share. The idea was to define sustainable income venues for municipality. The 5th development plan specified that a comprehensive plan for integrated urban management⁴⁶ needs to be prepared. Regime's General Policies in Urbanism Sector⁴⁷, which was supposed to guide executive, legislative, and judicial organizations in following regime's general policies in urbanism sector, also commanded that harmonized regulations and a coordinating management system to prepare, approve, and execute urban and rural development plans is the way to go. More directly related to heritage, it advised on respecting historical and spiritual identity of cities, with a balanced development scheme, by revitalization of historical fabrics and improvement or renovation of other old urban environments.

For Tehran specifically, the Management Office of Historical Context and Buildings was founded in 2011 as a response to Iran's 20-year Perspective Document⁴⁸. It was assigned a supportive role to ease management process and establish a new view toward urban heritage conservation in Tehran's historic center. This office was defined as a unit of Tehran Municipality's Deputy of Architecture and Urban Development. In 2012, they approved and published the Comprehensive Legal Act for Management and Protection of Tehran's Historical Context and Buildings. This document was prepared by a local company, i.e., Rahvand Shahr Consultant Engineers, containing four chapters. They name two main threats for Tehran's historical context: first, the lack of an integrated, coherent, and effective urban management system, and second, merely physical and speculative interventions neglecting unique characteristics of the setting (Rahvand Shahr Consultant Engineers, 2012). The document starts with setting a general vision statement for Tehran's historical context, and then demonstrates how to make it actually happen by defining the general and integrated strategic orientation. The text continues with proposing vision, strategic orientation, policy, and action plans all of those in sectoral level. The sectors which are covered in their study divide up into five different sections of legal, sociocultural, physical-

⁴⁶ The draft of Urban Management Bill (2014) addressed this issue, which itself got very controversial among heritage and city activists.

⁴⁷ imparted by the supreme leader on 18.02.2011 (29.11.1389 of the Iranian calendar), based on the draft prepared by the expediency council. It asked for determination of physical dimensions of horizontal and vertical development of cities with an emphasis on Iranian-Islamic identity and considering requisites of cultural, social, and economical setting, as well as issues related to safety, neighboring rights, infrastructure facilities, and environmental and climate considerations (ابلاغ سیاست‌های کلی نظام در امور شهرسازی [Regime's General Policies in Urbanism Sector], 2011).

⁴⁸ This document was imparted by the supreme leader on 04.11.2003 (13.08.1382 of the Iranian calendar) to three main office holders of executive branch, legislative branch, judicial branch respectively president, speaker of parliament, chief justice as well as the head of expediency council. It was meant to be considered as the basis for the next four 5-year development plans and put into effect from the 4th one of 2005-2009. According to this strategic document, by the dawn of year 2025 (1404 of the Iranian calendar), Iran is going to be a developed country ranking first among all the countries in the region in terms of economy, science, and technology. With its Islamic and revolutionary identity, Iran is going to be inspiring for the Islamic world and develop fruitful and effective interactions within international relations (سند نهایی چشم انداز ۲۰ ساله جمهوری اسلامی ایران [Twenty-Year Perspective Document of I.R.Iran], 2003). From my understanding of this document, points directly related to heritage are (as translated by me to English): preservation of Iranian-Islamic identity and safeguarding the cultural heritage; giving identity to urban and rural scape; revitalization of Iranian-Islamic architecture; strengthening and facilitating the involvement of Iran in international cultural assemblies and organizations; development in accordance with cultural, geographical, and historical requirements/values; proud of being Iranian; promoting national unity and identity and raising awareness of Iran's history, culture, civilization, arts; and dedication to Farsi language. There are also several points which could indirectly be interpreted in favor of heritage, though. Those, I would interpret, could be (again as translated by me to English): promoting research; confronting against corruption; supporting public foundations and charities; structuring the appropriate context for modification of legal, judicial, and administrative system; removing or merging parallel managements; developing public participation in order to benefit from people's capabilities; protection of natural environment and resources; following advanced criteria for safety of building and stability of structures; strengthening the inspection and monitoring system; and modification in regulations in order to avoid interference between inspection and monitoring institutions.

conservational, economical, and managerial aspects. The document concludes with proposing an organizational structure for Tehran's management office of historical context in both short and long term; it also clarifies duties of all personnel one by one. The document concluded with proposing a management structure for historical context of Tehran, to be formed and executed in two time-phases of short and long term. For each phase, the format of proposed management structure was clarified by introducing some expert committees, positions of personnel, and their duties. In my opinion, despite bringing up sociocultural aspects, still they are clearly inclined to physical display of heritage and how to keep conservation and development in balance regarding executive issues of municipality. This cannot be adequate, if one cares about heritage as meanings. But the document sounds to be quite enough for such management-based topic, as looking for and making a change in how we perceive and treat our heritage has to be pursued by the management office itself. Other than that, how-to is quite well clarified in duty defining section of this act. In addition to the document mentioned above, they defined ten specific area plans for central Tehran. This means that ten different urban design companies are assigned, each working on one; and Rahvand Shahr plays as forth agent and secretariat of the main managerial office. The projects vary in theme⁴⁹; but still largely concentrated on physical interventions and limited to improvement, restoration, and pedestrianization. In terms of location, size, and general features, etc. they vary considerably. The urban areas should be addressed overlap in some cases, which might be confusing and problematic.

2013-2015

Since a couple of years ago, there happened a rise in local communities' awareness and attentiveness about heritage especially by means of social media. Although there is still no systematic regulated way in the process of urban policy making for active involvement of the public, the number of heritage-led NGOs⁵⁰ generated and led by city experts has recently increased. As an example of their activities, in July 2015, in order to analyze the draft of Urban Management Bill (2014) from heritage perspective and criticize the idea of transferring administration and operation of cultural heritage to municipality, a public meeting titled "What will municipality do with historical heritage?" was organized by Yekshahr Group and Assembly of Right to the City of Bahamestan Foundation. In this session⁵¹, hinting on the troubling autonomy of the municipality, a lawyer argued that municipality is not qualified to take over heritage due to lack of specialized knowledge and past/current failures. The municipality will definitely 'extinguish' heritage⁵², he declared. The panel discussed that, referring to the part explaining on the necessities of such a bill, its goal is only building an integrated urban management system, but not at all heritage conservation. They also argued that the draft is fragmented, with no clear outline, far from the reality of many failed experiences of municipality in heritage practice so far, and in terms of law making standards indicates so many faults and deficiencies in the content of the

⁴⁹ Just as an example, one of the projects entitled Improvement in Night & Day Urbanscape of Places and Spaces in Tehran's Historic Center done by Herampey Consulting Engineers. I, as an urban designer and architect, was a member of research team in this project (from Jan. 2012 to Jul. 2013).

⁵⁰ e.g., Committee for Conservation of Historical Houses in Tehran, City Watch National Campaign, One City, From Bird View. etc.

⁵¹ with four panelists including: a lawyer, editor of memarinews.com, secretary of the Committee for Conservation of Historical Houses in Tehran, and representative of the chief executive officer of the Office of Architecture, Urban Design, and Valued Textures of Ministry of Roads and Urban Development [Source: <http://yekshahr.net/2015/07/post-293.html>]

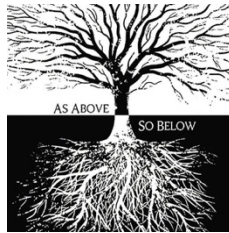
⁵² In June 2015, Social Discipline Plan of Tehran's region 12 got approved in a meeting by the municipality. The aim of this plan was announced to be improving the quality of life by removing anomalous activities and increasing security with regard to traffic, urban services, and physical-spatial structure within this urban area. One of the widespread criticisms by the press was pointed at the sudden demolition of many historical deteriorated buildings, with the excuse that they were either housing single men or becoming hangout spots for homeless addict people, and therefore had to be eradicated. The mayor, however, exculpated their decision by claiming that no demolished building was registered as national heritage.

document itself, i.e., not considering international and national agreements/principles/regulations⁵³. They, however, appreciated it that the draft has been published for public review and welcomes feedback through an online portal as well as other means of communication (Yekshahr, 2015).

Reviewing the evolution of Iran's heritage related policies and plans, within the years studied in this research, i.e., 1979-2015, indicates that it has largely been affected by major events in different time periods. The general conditions of the country, current demands, and the authority's tendency have always been reflected in the management system and national regulations. Islamic revolution, Iran-Iraq war, alterations at the national governmental level, and structural changes in the heritage supervisory sector all have had significant impacts on theory, policy making, and practice of cultural heritage conservation in Iran. Moreover, a classic approach is still prevailing which centers on historical heritage as national pride, even though collecting them from local scale. As argued, the establishment of Iran's Cultural Heritage Organization (ICO) in 1986 was a milestone in conservation of the country's cultural heritage. By 1992, ICO stabilized its institutional and legal state; and developed the bedrock for scientific research on cultural heritage in Iran. It was followed by a time span in which policies and plans redirected the focus of cultural heritage management toward economic aspects with regard to urban development. Laws of the 3rd Economic, Social, and Cultural Development Plan of the Islamic Republic of Iran (2000-2005) emphasized on integrated urban management with an interactive approach on conservation and development. It was the starting point of a new outlook towards built heritage and uplifting the culture of heritage conservation in Iran. In years between 1997 and 2004, cultural heritage conservation was more than before supported by policies and plans; and the attention scope of the central administration extended to revitalization of historical neighborhoods. In years between 2004 and 2013, several structural changes happened and some hasty decisions were made which weakened the capability and efficiency of heritage sector in the management system of the country. However, at the same time Iran's UNESCO heritage listing of tangible, intangible, and natural heritage grew. More recently, awareness and concern about heritage increased among the society and local communities. It could be understood as a signal for the advent of another era of cultural heritage conservation in Iran. This part of my research concludes by highlighting that within the timeframe discussed, i.e., 1979-2015, structural changes, policies and plans in the time span of 1997-2004 were the most attentive to and supportive of cultural heritage in Iran. This together with inclusion of Iran's Cultural Heritage Organization (ICO) in the cycle of planning management, e.g., its engagement in Iran's Supreme Council of Architecture and Urbanism and Commission Number 5, by acting on the 3rd development plan, facilitated the process of cultural heritage conservation in practice; and resulted in some achievements.

⁵³ e.g., according to article 8 of the Law of Civil Service Management, protection of environment and conservation of natural resources and cultural heritage are defined as governmental affairs which have to remain under the state's supervision and cannot be transferred to municipality or any other institution

3. Redirecting Presumptions... What Really Matters?



“As above, so below, as within, so without, as the universe, so the soul...”
— Hermes Trismegistus

3.1. Purpose(s) of Heritage(s)

Tracing back ‘the modern concept of heritage’, which certainly emerged from a European context, one could track the expansion of its notions within an over three-century time span. There has been a gradual shift from a desire for national patrimonial prestige on the global stage of monumental heritage to opening out into many other forms of heritage pertinent to cultural authenticity. It took decades for heritage as a concept to extend and include historic urban landscapes⁵⁴, intangible cultural heritages, natural heritages, and so on. It has lately been discussed by a number of heritage scholars that nowadays heritage is a ubiquitous phenomenon (Lowenthal, 2011; Harrison, 2013b; Schofield, 2014). Such an assertion usually elaborates on the path through which heritage grew from the concern of a handful of enthusiasts and specialists in one part of the world to a global trend which is now cherished almost everywhere in the universe. It also refers to the fact that we are living in an age in which almost anything can be perceived to be heritage. To put it another way, definitions of heritage have constantly been expanding and evolving in an extent to which resulted in the increasingly broad and heterogeneous even sometimes conflicting traces of the past compiled in our present. It seems that everything has the potential to be heritage only if we wish it to be, and as the Faro Convention (2005) makes plain, we believe we should “involve everyone in society in the ongoing process of defining and managing cultural heritage.” This statement puts forward such a great and generous idea that everyone be able to decide what their heritage should be, and how they want to describe it. As far as a conservation framework is concerned, it well conveys the value of cultural heritage for societies. Besides, one could say that it somehow upholds the same storyline according to which we were gradually told to direct our heritage conservation endeavors, in a turn from appreciating Lowenthal’s (1985) ‘foreign country’ of pure past to treasuring a more homely version of it, which could equally be embraced by everybody naturally without needing any distinct educational push from cultural heritage devotees or promoters.

Heritage, for sure, is not what it used to be. However, in the reality of heritage profession, it is still pretty much all of what it once used to be, plus all those others which are being labeled as heritage every now and then. Yet, this cannot be surprising, since the content of heritage has always been changing and expanding “and the way in which the term is understood is always ambiguous and never certain (Harrison, 2013b, 6).” Since the Nara Document on Authenticity (1994), importance and sensitivity of cultural context has been given special attention, which later on foregrounded intangible

⁵⁴ “The Historic Urban Landscape is the urban area understood as the result of a historic layering of cultural and natural values, extending beyond the notion of ‘historic centre’ or ‘ensemble’ to include the broader urban context and its geographical setting (UNESCO, 2011).”

cultural heritage within global discussions. And by now, it is widely acknowledged that “not all cultures understand the concept [of heritage] in the same way (Martínez, 2008, 245).” Therefore, it would be fair enough to assume that the “Is Everything Heritage? (LeBlanc, 1993)” debate is getting even more controversial in an era of “Heritage Is Everywhere (Schofield, 2014)” which then puts us in a state of uncertainty about the foundational purpose of heritage studies in the first place. This worry sounds reasonable and highly relevant when we are faced with a huge growing pile of listed ‘outstanding’ and also not-so-outstanding things⁵⁵. All in all, it is evident that heritage studies have newly found itself at a turning point where many critical arguments thus arisen. Some scholars alert that we are reaching an overloaded piling up of historic materials and all other categorizations we know today as heritage. To give a few examples in this regard, Harrison (2013a, 580) warns that “we risk being overwhelmed by memory, and in the process making all heritages ineffective and worthless.” Byrne (2013, 596) addresses the issue of scale in heritage by claiming that many of us find heritage most intimate when it resides in the canvas of our individual life histories. Witcomb and Buckley (2013, 564) argue that there is a need for a move away from questions concerning techniques and methodologies of heritage conservation towards an analysis of the purpose of heritage and its ideological functions in order to challenge those functions and attempt to change them.

Three above arguments, in more of a common agreement, underscore the vital importance of heritage for lives of present-time people. In other words, they reach for a newer notion of heritage as ‘everyday heritage’ that deserves much more recognition and on which I elaborate in chapter 4. Briefly, considering heritage as something interwoven with normal daily life would boost the chance that it plants the seed of meanings in people’s lives and blossoms into a more meaningful translation of heritage among the public. This way, a more long-lasting heritage could be brought about.

There have been important transitions in how official heritage is carried. As Harvey (2008, 32) points out, “from obsessions over site, or over artefactual integrity, to viewing emotion and embodied practice as legitimate and valuable vehicles through which history cultures may be practiced.” Besides, it is no mystery that ‘development in technology’ and ‘huge changes in the politics’ play crucial roles in how heritage was produced and consumed through time. “In all of this, a sense of purpose is critical. At present, this purpose is often found in educational benefits and community leadership, policies of social inclusion and even economic regeneration - goals which, on the face of it, seem a long way from the heritage agendas of the past (Ibid.).” With that, Harvey casts a light on the shifting notion of who leads history and heritage, from Orwell’s statement of winners in society to Lowenthal’s losers in society. Those that have been deprived of agency in the past - the downtrodden, the exploited, and the defeated - seem to be brought up to the surface of the hegemonic power structures of authority. However, this has been only at the scratch level and therefore not really enough. The faith that heritage contains a power to transform is common to heritage in all periods, but heritage ‘is not given; it is made’ by power, as Harvey (2001, 336) argues. Power of heritage made by power, subject to manipulations and distractions, backfires on what heritage is actually about and what its purposes are. This is yet another reason why heritage studies once again calls for a breath of fresh air by going back to the basics.

At this point in time, it might seem quite self-explanatory what the overall purposes of heritage are and what the common motives behind heritage conservation could be. They very often and for many pertain to the links between the past, people’s perceptions of self and others tied to an immediate past, and their longing for resonating with a sense of collective identity. Still, the community of heritage scholars and planners are encountering difficulties in anchoring to a clear and concrete set of modalities, I believe, simply because there is something more to this field which has not yet been

⁵⁵ All over in this monograph, ‘things’ is used as a general term for heritage, no matter tangible or intangible. Some may indeed be old, but their age is incidental; so, could be old or not-so-old.

known enough. Heritage is neither an object nor a product of discontinuity, it is a continuum, a way of making objects, a process of production. There is a long-awaited need for looking more deeply into our understanding of heritage, in order to find the essence within, and then be able to reflect it without. For me, the thing worth devotion is that essence, and not really the embodiments of it in any specific time space reality. This is not to say that physical dimension is unworthy of attention, but rather to be aware that once the essence is out and about, it could be seen in many forms of embodiment. Taking a spiritual stand towards heritage could open up a whole new path to much more enlightened views on missions of heritage and what it does. The easiest way or even the only possible one to step into such spiritual journey is by embracing ‘where’ and ‘when’ each of us are with regard to what we have got from past as heritage, which would obviously be right here and right now. This is important, when looking at the past, because it helps to better understand that differences and connections between them, here and there, now and then, are just two sides of the same coin.

Lowenthal (2015, 1) believes that the past inheres in all we do and think, even though we intentionally remove some traces of it, e.g., Holocaust, to assert our autonomy and expunge our errors. To him, the past is everywhere. “All around us lie features with more or less familiar antecedents. Relics, histories, memories suffuse human experience. Most past traces ultimately perish, and all that remain are altered. But they are collectively enduring. Noticed or ignored, cherished or spurned, the past is omnipresent.” In this new book⁵⁶, Lowenthal explores how societies view, appropriate, use, misuse, construct, reconstruct, glorify, and distance themselves from the past. Rather than trying to advance a particular interpretation of the past, he talks about various ways in which the past has been conceptually deployed across space and time, ‘the eviscerated past’, ‘the past made present’, and ‘the past held to blame’. He concludes with ‘accepting the past’, such all-embracing heritage that includes not only what we like or admire but also what we fear or abominate⁵⁷. Harvey (2008, 19), among others, calls heritage ‘a human condition’ interwoven within the power dynamics of any society and intimately bound up with identity construction at both communal and personal levels. He refers to Smith (2006) and agrees that heritage itself is not a thing and does not exist by itself. Rather, it is about the process by which people use the past, a ‘discursive construction’ with material consequences. When heritage is said to be discursively constructed, to the extent that ‘things don’t really exist until you give them a name’⁵⁸, we wonder why it has to be so, what are our purposes behind it all, or as Durkheim would question, what are those powerful ‘social facts’ which come into existence by the process of heritage.

3.1.1. Meanings and Perceptions

A Quotation from Václav Havel (1988, 237) reads, “The tragedy of modern man is not that he knows less and less about the meaning of his own life, but that it bothers him less and less.”

Motivational discussions around ‘why not only tangibility matters?’ is now old news, “even in the western world, the values of traditional heritage no longer reside exclusively on its physical fabric and form, but on intangible concepts that by their very nature are in constant flux (Araoz, 2011, 58).”

⁵⁶ The earlier volume of book, *The Past Is a Foreign Country*, published in 1985. It explored how societies, while geographically focused on the European-American world and temporally focused on the last two centuries, understand and treat the past. The book almost instantly attracted wide attention and positive critical acclaim. In recent years, though, David Lowenthal revisited the ideas at the heart of his classic book. The result is *The Past is a Foreign Country – Revisited* published in 2015. According to many reviewers, it is far more than a modest reworking of his earlier opus. This volume is not only longer by some 200 pages, it substantially surpasses its predecessor in terms of the insights it provides into the importance of the relationship human societies develop with the past.

⁵⁷ “It is one thing to deplore past injustice, quite another to blame its perpetrators for not living up to today’s ethical code (Lowenthal, 2015, 602).”

⁵⁸ title of a book edited by Rachel Lee, Diane Barbé, Anne-Katrin Fenk, and Philipp Misselwitz, published by Mkuki na Nyota, Dar es Salaam, 2017.

Graham and Howard - referring to Logan (2000) and his debate on the Ancient Quarter of the Vietnamese capital, Hanoi - confirm that there is a linkage between, for example, key religious buildings and the intangible heritage of myths and legends. They imply that there is a symbolic worth linked to the material or tangible heritage, rather than a 'value based on the authenticity of their physical fabric'. They also draw upon Deacon's (2004) observation of the South African World Heritage Site at Robben Island in order to demonstrate that no heritage value is completely tangible, even the "tangible can only be interpreted through the intangible (Graham and Howard, 2008, 4)." Deacon and Beazley (2007; as cited in Blake, 2015, 152) make it clear that they do not perceive intangible heritage as a separate kind of 'non-material' heritage, but they rather describe it "as a kind of significance or value, indicating non-material aspects of heritage that are significant." Examples of such significant non-material aspects are to be seen in performing arts, rituals, stories, knowledge systems, know-how and oral traditions, but as well as social and spiritual associations, symbolic meanings and memories associated with objects and places. Abu-Khafajah and Rababeh (2012, 72) refer to Marris (1986, 4) that meanings are 'organized structures of understanding and emotional attachments, by which grown people interpret and assimilate their environment'. They, in this sense, understand meanings as individuals' experiences, thoughts, feelings, and attitudes which all are intangible but indispensable part of the mechanism through which the tangible is perceived, identified, and evaluated as cultural heritage. Natsuko Akagawa (2016, 23) brings a conception of 'authenticity' to the fore that gives full recognition to specific local cultural practices, spiritual meanings, and natural environments. She thinks that rigid binaries implied in earlier definitions need to be replaced by a recognition that meanings assigned to objects and practices of heritage significance are multilayered.

John Tunbridge (in Onciul et al., 2017, 47-48) unpicks the concept of heritage and emphasizes the importance of understanding it as a process of meaning-making and interpretation. He writes, "it is about meanings – NOT about tangible or intangible relics from the past, which are the prime resources from which heritages are derived but are not in themselves 'heritage'." He defines heritage as "the typically plural and sometimes nebulous or evanescent nature of the meanings (Ibid., 49)", and finds it unfortunate that so many still equate heritage with the continued existence of past relics. Since their attrition by natural forces or human agency is ultimately inevitable, despite delay by worthy conservation and restoration efforts, he believes, such an equation is not only inaccurate but demoralizing. "Tunbridge considers the history of heritage and as well as its future, emphasizing the need for heritage to be viewed as an evolving concept that considers and allows for loss and destruction, as well as maintenance and preservation (Onciul, 2017, 4)."

Since social values, and most of the other conceptual frameworks of value, are culturally and historically constructed, they are not intrinsic to objects or environments. It is not as if some certain objects or environments hold some internal qualities that are to be revealed by the correct processes of investigation which could be conducted only by a limited body of experts. Although the previously dominant notions of value presume this to be the case, it is actually not. As a result of the 'cultural turn' in democratic societies allowing for plural interpretations rather than singular definition, that understanding of values has eroded. Recent understandings suggest that, depending on time and space, "object or environment is the bearer of an externally imposed culturally and historically specific meaning, that attracts a value status (Gibson and Pendlebury, 2009, 1)" of relevance to the people experiencing that time space reality. This, however, is not a practiced thought, and therefore, seems quite challenging to become a belief⁵⁹, which is nothing more than a chronic pattern of thought.

Just like the belief almost everyone has that the past is different from the present. It partly but largely is because we narrate the past from the standpoint of the present, rearranging data and revising

⁵⁹ "A belief is just a thought you keep thinking." Quotation from Abraham Hicks

conclusions in a modern manner. Historians' work responds to the shifting needs of audiences and changing notions of chronology and narrative. But as Lowenthal (2015, 19) argues, "growing doubts about the repetitive constancy of human affairs, growing acceptance of the inevitability of change, and growing faith that change meant progress led to Eurocentric awareness of the past as different from the present – a foreign country. Today as fiction and film trump academic history, that foreign past seems increasingly multifaceted, discordant, and debatable. Hence it gets domesticated." Once the past seems not much of a foreign country, the potentiality of it having actual meanings in people's everyday lives rises. And only then apprehension and real appreciation could come about more naturally. "While the range of historical scrutiny expands to include folk and aspects of life hitherto little known, we have lost the ready familiarity with the classical and biblical heritage that long imprinted European culture and environment. The breach with that legacy leaves us surrounded by monuments and relics we can barely comprehend and scarcely feel are ours. The rage to preserve is in part a reaction to anxieties generated by modernist amnesia. We preserve because the pace of change and development has attenuated a legacy integral to our identity and well-being. But we also preserve, I suggest, because we are no longer intimate enough with that legacy to rework it creatively. We admire its relics, but they seldom inspire our own acts and works. Past remains survive not to educate or emulate but only to be saved. Precisely because preservation has become a prime end in itself, it tends to preclude other uses of the past (Lowenthal, 2015, 592)." I would add, preservation with the intention of remembering the past still does not do much, because want it or not, be aware of it or not, the past is accumulated in the present anyways. So, it is more about deliberately choosing to tune into the essence of all that has been or happened before up until now. This is why it is important to understand that "heritage is less about tangible material artefacts or other intangible forms of the past than about the meanings placed upon them and the representations which are created from them (Graham and Howard, 2008, 2)." Picking up on those meanings and getting into a familiarity mode pertaining to them, therefore, has to be the very basic of any interaction with heritage. To toss the ignorance⁶⁰ aside and educate ourselves about the past is something, but how we comprehend our today's experience of it is something else. If anything, heritage is to be lived in the present, not the past.

Tangible versus intangible cultural heritage is only one of many faulty dualities created by human mind, as it is always both-and, it is never either-or. However, usage of this polarity has grown in the past several decades on an international scale. UNESCO in the 2003 convention⁶¹ has categorized intangible cultural heritage to include: a) oral traditions and expressions, including language as a vehicle of the intangible cultural heritage; b) performing arts; c) social practices, rituals and festive events; d) knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe; and e) traditional craftsmanship. It can be deduced that the term intangible "relates to forms of cultural heritage that lack physical manifestation. It also evokes that which is untouchable, such as knowledge, memories and feelings. In this light, it can also be suggested that intangible cultural heritage represents everything: the immaterial elements that influence and surround all human activity. Moreover, since human activity of the past exists only as tangible evidence, intangible cultural heritage must be tied, in whatever form it takes, to the present (Stefano et al., 2012, 1)." Intangible cultural heritage is meant to direct attention to the sociocultural values or meanings which those living nonphysical embodiments symbolize, but it very often remains unable to do so. Mostly because most people would still need to see them, touch them, hear them, taste them, or smell them, and if none is possible, they would not

⁶⁰ "What is new is admiration of ignorance. 'Idiocy is our new national goal', a former poet laureate concludes of American notions of the past. 'It took years of indifference and stupidity to make us as ignorant as we are today ... In the past, if someone knew nothing and talked nonsense, no one paid any attention ... Now such people are courted and flattered' (Lowenthal, 2015, 590-591)." referring to Charles Simic, 'Age of ignorance', NYRB blog, 20 Mar. 2012.

⁶¹ "The immaterial aspects of cultural heritage were first addressed in the UNESCO Recommendation on Traditional Culture and Folklore (1989) and more recent UNESCO treaties in this field are the 2001 Underwater Heritage Convention, the 2003 Intangible Heritage Convention and, the most recent, the 2005 Convention on the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (Blake, 2015, 4)."

easily believe in their existence. In other words, despite definitions⁶², intangible cultural heritages are also expected to have some sort of physical manifestation in one way or another. And since they normally do, they end up being simply (mis)understood and (mis)taken as their few, some, or many forms of physical manifestation or the products, rather than the real them, i.e., the sociocultural values or meanings. So, in that sense, there is no big difference between tangible and intangible authorized heritages. They seem to be sailing two different boats, but they are actually heading down the same stream. They both are stuck in the materiality of cultural products, rather than being enlightened about their meanings. “It has to be accepted that the distinction that has developed in cultural heritage law-making, especially within UNESCO, between tangible and intangible cultural heritage is an artificial one that does not accord with the reality (Blake, 2015, 10).”

Laurajane Smith (2009, 36) points at the degree of importance that is placed on the materiality of cultural heritage and its technological achievements, so much so that it “is simply ‘understood’ by the aesthetic worth of certain objects that the material has often come to stand in for the social or cultural values it symbolizes. In other words, the monument tends to be conflated with the cultural and social values that are used to interpret it and give it meaning. Subsequently within the AHD heritage is the monument, archaeological site or other material thing or place, rather than cultural values or meanings.” The domains of intangible cultural heritage are as well under the influence of a similar, if not the same, authorization tendencies. For instance, traditional skills of Persian carpet weaving, inscribed⁶³ in 2010 on the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, are listed under the domains of knowledge and practices about nature and the universe and traditional craft skills. But first off, trying to make a correlation between Persian carpet and cultural heritage, it is very likely that the carpet itself as the end product pops up in mind first and foremost. In other words, natural to human mind programmed for reality check, generally speaking, it is the carpet that seems to be instantly understood as cultural heritage, not the skills of carpet weaving. Next, intentionally focusing on intangible aspects, the UNESCO-approved summary mainly reports on the how-to skills in terms of what materials and tools are being used, what methods and techniques are being employed during the whole process from before to after the actual weaving phase, and basically who does what how. While all these are interesting and informative, there is much more to Persian carpets than that meets the eye. Carpets are not just simple floor covers. Utilitarian purposes are merged with symbolic purposes in such manner that Persian carpet repeatedly calls to mind the eternal paradise. It draws the meaning of tranquility at home, close to dwelling in a blooming garden. Stories could be told on each design, pattern, motif, and color combination. So, it has to be admitted that there are other and obviously higher dimensions to intangibility which have not yet been even clearly targeted by authorized heritage regimen. It is quite evident by reading between the lines of five official domains mentioned above. This, however, is not to prove UNESCO wrong, or to undervalue what it has been promoting with regard to intangible cultural heritage. Rather, to hint that intangibility has its roots beyond skills, knowledge, or certain practices. Perhaps, to say that intangibility is nourished by beliefs, feelings, and thoughts long before it manifests as those skills, knowledge, or certain practices. Not that they are unexplored or obscure. Quite the contrary, to most locals, they are heard-of and well relatable. They are actually the bedrock of most people’s engagement with the material past. Abu-Khafajah and Rababeh (2012, 72) touch upon the same argument but with a slight turn of attention to the meaning-making process of tangibles. They find the meaning-[of tangibles]-making process to be “a subjective process that involves people’s stories and memories.” The process is influenced by

⁶² UNESCO’s 2003 convention proposes five broad domains in which intangible cultural heritage is manifested. It defines, for instance, traditional craftsmanship “is perhaps the most tangible manifestation of intangible cultural heritage. However, the 2003 Convention is mainly concerned with the skills and knowledge involved in craftsmanship rather than the craft products themselves.” [Source: <https://ich.unesco.org/en/traditional-craftsmanship-00057>]

⁶³ two separate inscriptions due to location, Traditional skills of carpet weaving in Fars (Nomination file No. 00382) and Traditional skills of carpet weaving in Kashan (Nomination file No. 00383). It should be mentioned that there are several other areas in Iran equally important in carpet weaving with their own traditional skills and a variety of products.

individuals' perceptions as well as contexts, they do not necessarily resemble realities, but rather reflect individuals' understandings of these realities.

Beheshti (2017, 12) refers to the “substantive differences between Iranian and Western architecture” which are fundamental yet not visible and tangible. He explains that “in the Western worldview, the space is often dissectible to elements such as ceilings, floors, walls and openings. This implies a functional approach to the space, more than a metaphorical one. [...] In other words, in Western architecture, the basic elements such as floor, ceiling, window, and wall are not significant, per se, until when an architect or a resident of the house adds something to them. [...] On the other hand, in Iranian architecture, the ceiling [for instance] plays an important role since beyond its function, it carries the metaphorical meanings. In that sense, the ceiling was interpreted as the ‘Asemaneh’ (empyrean) with its opening in the center, the so-called Horno; this means in the poetic and imaginative view of Iranians to the space, the ceiling should become an alternative for the firmament wherein sun, moon, and stars are present.”

3.1.2. Local Heritage and Place-related Identity

“Isn’t Venice a theatrical city [. . .], where the audience [. . .] and the actors are the same [. . .] (Lefebvre and Régulier 2004 [1986]: 96)?”

It has to first be clarified what is meant by local in the term local heritage. It typically refers to some particular location, no matter as small as a sparsely populated village or as large as a transcontinental region. In this research, however, I understand the locality of local heritages as the state or fact of being internal to and embedded in the locals' ways of life rather than simply having a pinpointed location. So, for me, it is more a matter of who, why, and how self-identifies as local rather than where and what hosts its portrayals. Neill (2004, 2), quoting Inglis (2001), states that ‘identity is constituted in terms of what is ultimately important to an individual. It situates a person in moral space’. That having been said, I elaborate on place and how it relates to my understanding of local heritage.

Jane Jacobs in her 1961 book⁶⁴ criticizes 1950s urban planning policies in the United States and with that holds architects and bureaucrats responsible for the decline of lively neighborhoods and social life of many cities. Sharon Zukin translates ‘character and liveliness’ in Jacobs’s vocabulary to ‘authenticity’ in her own vocabulary. While standing for Jacobs’s interest in density and diversity and her opposition to over scale development, Zukin (2010, 220) argues that “preserving the old streets, buildings, and blocks that seemed so old-fashioned [...] sustained the delicate fabric of social uses and cultural meanings that wove people together.” For her, “authenticity refers to the look and feel of a place as well as the social connectedness that place inspires.” On this authenticity, she believes, the city’s future would depend. Sense of place, a close connotation of Zukin’s authenticity, is another term cherished by many promoting a variety of criteria with particular reference to plans, management, and other forms of intervention that may help achieve memorable and desirable places. Michael Clark (2012), however, seeks a critical appreciation of the idea of sense of place, and notices that for places to have true meaning they need something more. He gives credit to Frank A. Mills⁶⁵ (2006) for calling for places that have soul, and concludes “places reflect the people that use them more than their designers’ and managers’ skill and manipulation (Clark, 2012, 129).” He makes a distinction between educating

⁶⁴ The Death and Life of Great American Cities

⁶⁵ www.frankamills.com

Direct quotation from the online (although seems not to be accessible from the internet anymore) essay entitled The Soul of Place: “When organic growth is supplanted by imposed ideas, the fertile, fragile, spirit, the soul, of place comes under attack, falling victim to ill-conceived plans. Mystical spiritualities tell of a ‘creative breath’, or melody, that breathes place into existence. Call it what you may, but it is this ‘life-force’, the dynamism, that gives place soul, that makes a space a Place.”

and cajoling, empowering and controlling, to implicitly suggest we must accept that sense of place is an expression of individual identity and community values, and therefore, “where markets fail to use opportunities⁶⁶ we should let those who can relate to the place take over (Ibid., 130).” Along similar lines, I interpret the bond between people and place as a window to place’s soul through which what local heritage for the locals really is could be spotted. Still, cities and places transform. They are always ‘in states of becoming’, so are the people. This brings the topic of social values, which are constantly shifting by nature, back to attention. To put it another way, local heritage cannot be a fixed thing. It, rather, acts as ‘a vehicle of expression’⁶⁷ on which place identity goes for a ride of expansion. Zukin (2010, 222) is alert to the ever-changing nature of place-bound cultures and local identities “that we thought, mistakenly, would last forever.” Nezar AlSayyad states that identity and hybridity are related. He cites examples from other authors, such as Kathryn Woodward (1997) and Stuart Hall (1996), to support his claim that “despite the fact that identity may be rooted in sameness, [...] identity is always about difference. [...] And] identification as a process always operates across difference (AlSayyad, 2001, 4).”⁶⁸ He also draws on another notion from Benedict Anderson (1983) that “all national identities are constructed, and the differences between them lie mainly in the different ways in which they are imagined (Ibid.).”

Maurice Halbwachs (1950), French philosopher and sociologist, believes that human beings have spatial memory. Buildings and places shape spatial frameworks within which our various activities take place. He also advanced the thesis that, beyond individual memory, people share a socially constructed memory within their society; and only this spatial imagery linked to group consciousness has the stability to allow us to understand the past in the present (Hebbert, 2005, 584; Abdelmonem and Selim, 2012, 165-166). Likewise, William J. V. Neil elaborates on ‘the spatiality of cultural identity’ while examining three cities. He exhorts urban planning scholars to put more emphasis on the meanings that are given to particular qualities of specific places. As put by him, “to say that individual identity is possible only in relation to a cultural context is to state a truism (Neill, 2004, 2).” Neill relates cultural identity to, first, ‘collective memory’ as something changing which can take various forms ‘according to the emergencies of the moment (Samuel, 1994, x; as cited in Neill, 2004, 10-15)’; and second, ‘place’ as it ‘is endowed with meaning by people (Madanipour, 1996, 158; as cited in Ibid.)’ and the narratives of everyday lives.

Denis Byrne - while drawing a distinction between affect, feeling, and emotion - points to affect as being transpersonal⁶⁹ ‘which flows between bodies’. He borrows the term ‘affective contagion’ introduced by Thrift (2008) to discuss the importance of space and also things in space which in his view can be as affectual as people are (Byrne, 2013, 597). To my understanding, he speaks of place as its aura, affected by everything that makes it what it is, which cannot be defined by the separate things located within it. “It is not the castle, cathedral or cuckoo pound, nor even burial mound, bus-shelter or bluebell wood that separately defines the significance of a place, but a messy mingling of things tangible and intangible, fixed and transient, big and small, ordinary and special (Clifford, 2011, 14).” I would like to call this gathering of things in the place a rendezvous. Kim Dovey calls it assemblage, in

⁶⁶ “There is a tension between our roles as passive consumers of products and as active producers of individually and communally held assets. Most of what we do occupies a confusingly shared space between market and state provision, partly based on purchasing power and consumer status, entitlement and knowledge, and partly through direct action that maintains and enhances individual and collective ownership. This relates to place where a product is specific to a particular location (Clark, 2012, 119).”

⁶⁷ “As the nineteenth century progressed, heritage became the vehicle for both ‘conservative’ and ‘radical/progressive’ movements searching for an answer to the perceived evils of modern society (Harvey, 2008, 27).”

⁶⁸ “The *Oxford English Dictionary* explains that “identity” derives from the Latin *idem*, which means “sameness,” and that it shows an etymological similarity to “likeness” and “oneness,” which are expressed by the Latin *similitas* and *unitas*. Likewise, “ident(i)” stems from the Latin *identidem*, meaning “over and over again, repeatedly (AlSayyad, 2001, 4).”

⁶⁹ “Affective states such as love, hate, envy and fear entail actual bodily changes in the recipient of affect, but affect, itself, is ‘transpersonal’, which is to say it is that which flows between bodies (Byrne, 2013, 597).”

the most general sense, as unfolds from the interactions between parts⁷⁰, which implies much more than either the materiality of physical form or the spatial meanings that emerge from its construction and use. He believes that all places are assemblages, and points out that places are not just locations occupying a certain extent in space but have intensity. “It is the intensity that is most strongly linked to the sense and affect of place - the intensity of sunlight; the buzz of conversation; the whiteness of the walls; the vastness of the sea; the sound of birds; the smell of coffee (Dovey, 2009, 26).”

Henri Lefebvre, whilst not encouraging a nostalgic redeployment of the past in the present, offers his radical critique of modern cities by looking back on the traditional towns (Coleman, 2015, 114). In particular, he recollects the Mediterranean ones and regards social organization and chance as the province of their different kinds of public spaces⁷¹. In his view, the majority of intervention projects in aging inner-city quarters⁷², with their banal claims for the arts-and commerce-led regeneration and the apparent social or political neutrality of aesthetic concerns, lack contributing to the gutting of the neighborhood and its rhythms (Ibid., 110). He wants the architects to consider what is being designed by them as a carrier of meanings, and discern or decode the dialogue between their work and what they are adding notes on, i.e., existing fabric of the neighborhood. ‘What does the proximity between a certain archaism attached to history and the exhibited supra-modernity whisper?’, he asks. This question is an important one, because a common point of departure for most architects and urban designers has been that of ‘think global, act local’ which fades out national borders and instead credits cities and other types of settlement with bigger roles in the glocalization era. Each city is expected to build its own image, reintroduce itself, and stand on its own potentialities. Thus, reaching for local heritages seems to be more desirable than ever before. Nevertheless, there have existed only few societies in isolation, if not none. As Thomas Gensheimer explains, the development of the identity a community seeks to maintain is greatly influenced by external factors. “Rarely are cities monolithic in form or design, but rather represent the culmination of specific historical events and general cultural influences. [...] These changes are at times the result of shifting forms of political status, but more often they are the outcome of influences which derive from the exchange of ideas and efforts to create new forms of identity (Gensheimer, 2001, 21).” Yet, elaborating on the indigenous roots of Swahili urbanism, he emphasizes the reflection of local expectations, functional needs, and spatial preferences on the possible foreign origins of architectural and urban forms. Redirecting to Lefebvre’s concern from another angle, historical fabric as a whole is the real venue for our evolving identity by accommodating our normative societal behavior through generations (Abdelmonem and Selim, 2012, 182). Drawing the example of Avebury - a World Heritage Site in Southern England - and deploying the argument of Stukeley (1743) on ‘its heritage biography’, Harvey points out the importance of ‘the retrospective memory of the site, to be deployed in present centered and future oriented interjections into the identity and religious politics of the nation’ rather than ‘an appeal to the masses for verification’ or the

⁷⁰ “It is perhaps best seen as a ‘state of affairs’ in contrast to a ‘thing’ or a collection of parts. The assemblage is also not an organized system in the sense that its workings are not organic. The parts of an organism such as a branch of a tree, or an organization such as a bank, have an entirely determined and necessary organic role. The parts of an assemblage are contingent rather than necessary, [...]. For instance, a street is not a thing nor is it just a collection of discrete things. The buildings, trees, cars, sidewalks, goods, people, signs, etc. all come together to become the street, but it is the connections between them that makes it an assemblage or a place (Dovey, 2009, 16).”

⁷¹ “According to Lefebvre, public spaces and the layout of towns, inflected by dynamic topography, are key features of Mediterranean cities and the rhythms that characterise them. In modern cities, public space and topography are typically either diminished or obliterated; and where topography is allowed to stand, it tends to be mastered by technique. And where public space is allowed to flourish, it tends to be consumed, transformed into a stage of consumption rather than of sociability or political action (Coleman, 2015, 114).”

⁷² Lefebvre himself articulates the antithesis, and singles out an example for special attention. The Centre Georges Pompidou (1971–1977), on the Rue de Beaubourg, in Paris, the city he knew intimately. At least for him, “interestingly, although the Pompidou appears an ecstatic celebration of machine production, it has a strangely handmade quality, as a one-off, rather than the result of mass production, even at the level of individual elements, which surprisingly embody a reassuring humanness both in the quality of manufacture and in the scale of these parts fitted together to form an almost overwhelming whole, at the scales of the human body, the neighbourhood in which it sits and the traditional city it begins to fragment (but also paradoxically unifies) (Coleman, 2015, 109).”

‘sentiment to preserve any physical remains’, in order for it to be useful in the present, resonant of a past, and meaningful for a future time (Harvey, 2008, 23-26).

It still and often goes forgotten that “the subject of our heritage ‘gaze’, to borrow from Urry (1990), is not so much a ‘thing’ as a set of values and meanings. ‘Heritage’ is therefore ultimately a cultural practice, involved in the construction and regulation of a range of values and understandings (Smith, 2006, 11).” Old buildings of city centers with their structure and appearance - material, architecture style, interior spatial layout, etc. - are considered representatives of a certain era and the inhabitants’ lifestyle. Of course, they could show tourists or outsiders an image of the past which is valuable for its own sake. But taking this interesting display of once-upon-a-time ‘them’ for granted, or accepted as given, runs the risk of disregarding those embedded contents and meanings which are precious to ‘us’. Lowenthal (2015, 594) unfolds this misunderstood twist, in my opinion in the most odd but lucid way, as he writes, “for the general public, to be sure, the past was never a foreign country. [...] History vanishes; change becomes nothing but life-cycle nostalgia. [...] the same motives and mentalities animate medieval as modern folk, elemental passions enacted on a timeless stage. But today the past is ever more comprehensively domesticated. The past [...] is now truly like a foreign country. They do things exactly the same there (Lowenthal, 2015, 594).” For me, this statement speaks to the ‘heritage industry’ which by expanding and widening its scope created a separation between people and a group of them who work with cultural heritage as their jobs in the public sector, i.e., those who are committed to the creation, management, and interpretation of an ever-expanding activity. “These doers had no interest in posing the questions ‘why are we doing what we are doing and what are the consequences of doing it?’ These questions were left to a handful of academics to pose and attempt to answer. This schism among those involved in heritage has led to two mutually incomprehensible solitudes (Ashworth in Onciul et al., 2017, 52).”

Sara McDowell benefits from the arguments of Rose (1995), Kuusisto (1999), Creswell (2004), and Sumaratojo (2004) on ‘place’ and ‘memory’ to explain how ‘heritage’ is invested with meaning due to the connection, either physically or emotionally, people establish with them. She notes that heritage is “bound up in notions of belonging (or not belonging), ownership and consequently identity (McDowell, 2008, 38).” Knowing a place or landscape, however, might not be the same, as knowing is relative. “Knowledge can be accumulated over generations, or over weeks, days even. These familiar places and areas of landscape are also reference points which, according to Relph (1985), construct in our memories and affections, a here from which to discover the world, and a there to which we can return (Schofield and Szymanski, 2011, 3).” Collective remembrance is not to imagine a group of people thinking the same thought, rather like a choir singing from the same hymn sheet. It is that each one of us can associate ourselves with other people’s experience (Benton and Cecil, 2010, 12-13). Khafajah and Rababeh (2012, 71) identify “the intangible as being memories and stories involved in the meaning-making process of archaeological sites that are generally referred to as cultural heritage.” They believe that “these memories and stories are shaped and reshaped by local communities’ perceptions of, and experiences in, archaeological sites. They are also governed by contemporary contexts and cultures rather than intrinsic values that scholars assign to cultural heritage.”

Beforehand, I would better highlight the (slight but at the same time considerable) difference between my usage of the word ‘intangible’ and its common definition fueled by UNESCO. Notwithstanding the relevance of those listed in UNESCO’s domains of ‘intangible cultural heritage’ (including: oral traditions and expressions; performing arts; social practices, rituals and festive events; and so forth), they do not appeal to me considering the very purpose of this research. Instead, since I am discussing urban built heritage, I stick to investigation of public space in old neighborhood areas of city. By the term ‘intangible’ - though I admit that it might be not the most accurate word choice but still passable enough - I do intend to draw attention to those lesser known/noticed qualities of public space which

on the one hand characterize the place, and on the other hand are characterized by the place. I (for now) call them intangibles⁷³; as for me, heritage is more about meaning of tangibility or meaningful values of it. Either way, public space is seen to interlink and portray some glimpses of historic city's spirit. For me, it is not decisive whether the surrounding or nearby built mass meets international selection criteria for preservation or not. Rather, in my opinion, how far the place inspires (or even in injured cases like Tehran, used to inspire) local life is important because, actually, the socio-spatial life of each city could be expressive of its identity.

For the sake of my argument's focus, I would like to clarify the scale of urban area which I am talking about and also the range of intangible features which I am looking for. I am thinking of qualities like when you pass through a soundless narrow alley in the heart of Tehran with either orange brick or plain white walls of ordinary houses on the sides, gazing at geranium pots hung from rather small wooden windows here and there; before you notice, you turn left into an old covered pathway along which people are busy grocery shopping in tiny stores full of color and light; you keep walking but even slower, getting tempted to check out that gorgeous tablecloth awhile, only if you are not supposed to meet a friend by Golestan Palace's front door in ten minutes; then picturing you would better go across the courtyard of Imam Mosque, it will save you some time; and who knows, you probably stumble on other surprises in the way. This kind of graceful stories with 'you' and 'place' could have happened or would happen to anybody, no matter local or nonlocal; and, of course, it is not only about Tehran or anywhere else in the whole globe exclusively.

3.2. Alternative/Unconventional Logic of Appreciation | Why?

Smith (2006, 3) writes, "the physicality of the Western idea of heritage means that 'heritage' can be mapped, studied, managed, preserved and/or conserved, and its protection may be the subject of national legislation and international agreements, conventions and charters. However, heritage is heritage because it is subjected to the management and preservation/conservation process, not because it simply 'is'. This process does not just 'find' sites and places to manage and protect. It is itself a constitutive cultural process that identifies those things and places that can be given meaning and value as 'heritage', reflecting contemporary cultural and social values, debates and aspirations." It is commonly accepted now that those given meanings and values attributed to heritage things and places cannot be immutable, but rather they evolve constantly. Plus, their evolution occurs only in respect to the setting for which they have to make sense and in which they are being judged. In fact, the process which works just fine starts to go wrong as soon as it tries too hard to fit everything from all settings into its own existing categories. Although those established assumptions⁷⁴ have more recently been questioned and gotten modified, what we have now is more categories to fit things into, but not really a genuine change of approach in the field of heritage studies. This is, to me, like taking one step forward, two steps back. It seems as if the dominant heritage discourses resist to realize that Western

⁷³ Only to make things somewhat easier for me to comprehend, I put them, i.e. qualities of public space, in two groups: a) tangibles and b) intangibles. I infer that built heritage has both material and immaterial parts. The material is obviously that which is tangible and exists as long as the structure is alive. The immaterial aspects are those which are intangible like soul, spirit, memories, etc. and exist beyond the physical lifespan of the buildings. But, I cannot agree more that we can never separate them as they always come together. Otherwise, it does not make sense at all. Anyway, I position myself more interested in those intangibles. However, I should mention that by the term intangible I do not necessarily refer to UNESCO's domains of 'intangible cultural heritage', including: oral traditions and expressions; performing arts; social practices, rituals and festive events; and so forth. Rather, since I am discussing 'urban built heritage', I stick to investigation of public spaces in neighbourhood areas of old city.

⁷⁴ "The recognition of plural meanings sits awkwardly with the established heritage discourse which is rooted in an essentialist scientific approach and underpinned by the view that there are experts who hold the authority to recognise the values intrinsic to heritage phenomena. These assumptions are largely Western and give primacy to 'universal' values and tangible, material forms (Hawke, 2012, 235-6)."

approaches may not always help in understanding all cultures⁷⁵, and that shall be okay. I think, there is a simile between this cultural otherness in the world and what Lowenthal calls ‘the otherness of the past’ as he notes⁷⁶, “young Europeans are equally blind to the otherness of the past, incapable of accepting its alterity. Seemingly unaware that people viewed things differently five centuries ago, 15-year-old history students ‘argue only from their modern viewpoint of individualism, secularism and autonomy’. Unable to envision ‘pre-modern reality and morality, even in theory’, they rely solely on human rights philosophy ‘for an era before the invention of human rights’ (Lowenthal, 2015, 597).” I would say, even if they accept the otherness of the past, they cannot help but look down on it, due to their human minds which are wired to be judgmental about others.

It is for many the establishment of the Intangible Heritage Section⁷⁷ at the UNESCO Secretariat that, on the universal organizational scale, marks the epiphany about the otherness of other cultural expressions. It is interesting to know how this all started and what contributed to its emergence up until 1993 when it officially kicked off. Marilena Alivizatou (2012) gives credit to the success of Japanese and Korean models along with the influence of Mr Koichiro Matsuura⁷⁸. She explains, from as early as the 1950s and 1960s, these Asian countries adopted laws for the protection of traditional practices and ceremonies thought to be under threat by processes of post-World War II modernization and globalization. Their state-sponsored programs such as the Living National Treasures for intangible heritage preservation were successful, because they created mechanisms and institutions that would record, sustain, and perpetuate those practices. It was, however, only in the 1970s and following proposals by South American representatives (Sherkin, 2001) that “the topic of the preservation of ‘folklore’ and ‘traditional practices’ came to the fore of international diplomatic negotiations via the 1989 Recommendation on the Safeguarding of Traditional Culture and Folklore (Alivizatou, 2012, 10).” This UNESCO chapter, on the contrary, was not nearly as successful as what the Asian models accomplished. While the Asian models, in a way, breathed new life into and provided a different framework for thinking about and dealing with traditional cultural expressions as intangible heritage, UNESCO’s 1989 recommendations narrowed down to archival focus (Hafstein, 2004). “In a sense, UNESCO’s late 20th-century agendas of cultural heritage preservation are a continuation – although obviously on a more institutional and international level – of the modern ‘rage to preserve’ the past, tangible and intangible, and in so doing formalise the knowledge and practice of heritage preservation through science and bureaucracy. This further intensifies the paradoxical aspects of the intangible heritage discourse expressed in the wish to capture and document that which is meant to be alive and therefore constantly changing (Alivizatou, 2012, 15).”

Heritage, as what it has collectively been decided to be, is a highly politicized process which is bound up in the construction, reconstruction, and deconstruction of the perceived past. It is generally defined as ‘a value-laden concept’, related to processes of economic and cultural commodification, but in itself reflective of a relationship with the past. Old things, buildings, or places are organic beings that age and decay is integral to them. It was believed that what was authentic about them was the entire record of the changes they had endured, and that was why some like John Ruskin and William Morris insisted that old buildings not be tampered with, save for rudimentary repair (Lowenthal, 1999, 7).

⁷⁵ “I live in a world which has, since the Renaissance and scientific revolutions, adopted a number of binary oppositions or divisions. Art is distinct from life, craft from art, popular taste from high culture, realism from symbolic art, the Baroque from the Gothic style, the urban from the rural, sports and games from ceremonial and religion, the material body from spiritual purity, nature from culture. I initially found the Japanese experience very puzzling because it challenges all of these separations (Macfarlane, 2007, 19).”

⁷⁶ referring to Andreas Körber, ‘Can our pupils fit into the shoes of someone else?’ in Joke van der Leeuw-Roord, ed., *The State of History Education in Europe* (Körber-Stiftung, 1998), 123-38 at 136.

⁷⁷ The Intangible Heritage Section of UNESCO was set up as The Living Human Treasures initiative in 1993, led to The Proclamation of Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity from 1997 to 2005, and The Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Heritage in 2003.

⁷⁸ UNESCO Director General from 1999 until 2009

The flux of events in today's heritage-conscious world, however, challenges earlier 'preserved-in-amber' authenticity ideals. Some heritage sites commemorate a particular date or occasion, but not all heritages do, and thus do not need to be kept away from continuity of life and change. In fact, it is now widely known that heritage only survives in changing forms and voices. There are even concerns that extreme conservationism over heritage 'stuff' endangers the importance of heritage's ultimate purpose. "The Dutch architect Rem Koolhaas calls preservation a 'dangerous epidemic' spread by 'clueless preservationists who, in their zeal to protect the world's architectural legacies, end up debasing them', gentrifying and sanitizing historic urban centres. Noting that UNESCO and similar bodies sequester one-sixth of the earth's surface, with more to come, he terms heritage a 'metastasizing cancer' (Lowenthal, 2015, 588)." Tunbridge (in Onciul et al., 2017, 49) warns that 'we risk heritage overkill and community disengagement'. Heritage is not directly about stuff, thus is not closely dependent upon either the preservation or the destruction of the stuff. Rather, heritage is about meanings or, as Silberman (2012) states, heritage is the "progressive mixture of individual creative [and even sometimes] not-so-creative expressions that really is in fact the flow of culture itself."

Heritage, as another manmade concept, has only increased its omnipresence in our lives and worldview over the past few decades. What it means to us has nuanced, as we keep expanding the field of phenomena we think it should embrace. Its meanings more and more lean toward that of 'living culture', 'dynamic traditions', and 'traditional wisdom' in terms of knowledge and practices concerning the universe (Máiréad Nic Craith, 2015)⁷⁹. Heritage also creates a sense of belonging through social cohesion, which is not easily attainable by whatever techniques the mainstream topic of participatory approaches might prescribe. Social cohesion means much more than social inclusion, and it is yet another reason why I refrain from entering or entertaining the participatory debates in this research. Josefsson and Aronsson (2016) argue "that the present heritage concept would benefit from the introduction of the concept of life-values, not in order to replace it, but to enrich and take heritage into the 21st century." Araoz (2011, 59) suggests that the significance of conservation is understanding 'the vessels of value', understanding where those values rest. I find the presentation Coleman (2015) offers on what might constitute a Lefebvrian architecture in cities, as opposed to what would not, equally helpful for architects and urbanists in thinking alternatives regarding heritage and conservation, to imagine counter-practices to the mainstream of production. A number of Aldo van Eyck's ideas on architecture⁸⁰, as Coleman (2015, 98) states, mirror Lefebvre's collapse of rigid oppositions between apparent dualities, his concept of rhythm, and his conviction that science and technology do not have all the answers. In particular, van Eyck's concepts of the 'twinphenomena'⁸¹ and the 'in-between'⁸², have an affinity with Lefebvre's approach.

3.3. Practices and Discrepancies | to Whom?

⁷⁹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d9ZHj4ihTog&feature=youtu.be>

"Intangible Heritage - Why should we care?" TEDx at Heriot-Watt University

⁸⁰ Aldo van Eyck (1918-1999): an architect from the Netherlands, a member of CIAM and then in 1954 a co-founder of Team 10 (a group of avant-garde architects within CIAM members supporting a course of reform after World War II), one of the most influential protagonists of the architectural movement 'structuralism'

⁸¹ a coexistence of necessary double conditions such as: ideal and real, unity and diversity, part and whole, small and large, many and few, simplicity and complexity, change and constancy, order and chaos, individual and collective, possible and impossible. In this approach, the association between the terms is dialectical and relational, rather than separational and conflictory. Contradictions (or complexity) are tolerated, and synthesis is not the aim, nor is the reductive isolation of specific elements or aspects of the object of analysis.

⁸² a third condition that mediates the coexistence of conventional opposites (twinphenomena), does not attempt to resolve them through synthesis, but rather makes a virtue of them. It is a powerful tool for drawing something new out of the given. For example, three terms possible-probable-impossible according to Lefebvre's 'triadic analysis', are linked but maintain their individual identity. This approach mounts significant resistance to dualistic rationality, in which apparent opposites are maintained as separate or conflicting to uphold mental or organizational clarity.

Smith (2009) argues the social values of class deference and humility in English society are reinforced by the ways in which the country houses in England are interpreted to and by visitors. She observes⁸³ that the act of visit itself is perceived as a way of keeping the values that the houses stood for going, because “many saw themselves as engaging in heritage, engaging in the preservation of a lifestyle, building or social history, and ultimately their own social and/or national identity. [...] by the act of their visit and their monetary contributions to and/or membership of the National Trust or English Heritage. [...] as making a contribution to the preservation of the site (Smith, 2009, 40).” This way of appreciating authorized heritage might be the case for other nations, or otherwise, depending on how similar the administration structures people’s engagement in heritage system and what social values are underlined and reproduced in the interpretations of the chosen heritage⁸⁴. I have my doubts about whether Iranian visitors of the traditional courtyard houses in Iran, for instance, would feel anything similar⁸⁵. In other words, social values that inform class identity or status hierarchy are way less likely to dominate the ways in which people in Iran talk and think about their architectural heritage. Visiting historical buildings, however, could very well boost the social values of patriotism and nationalism, and provoke feelings and emotions with that regard. But, I would say, the act of visiting a house, no matter with or without paying entry fee, is hardly seen as contributing to the performance of heritage conservation. In my opinion, it is partly due to the state-formulated system of heritage management in Iran, as already discussed in chapter 2, that carries out the duty and task of preserving national heritages mostly on the government’s shoulders. That plus setting an example of idealistic and splendid conservation which, unknowingly but unavoidably, gives people an impression that it is not something they are able to do or can afford. Pointed out by one of my expert interviewees (I10), only a limited number of the huge quantity of historical buildings all around Iran get to be granted a conservational reutilizing process which demands a considerable amount of funding and expertise. As much as the end result of such extravagant best practices are well received by people, they could subtly threaten the scope of nongovernmental conservation practice, simply because it appears to most individuals, who might actually own an untended historical building, that dedication to a hard and costly process is out of their reach. While, it does not have to be like that. In recent years, though, a trend of reconnecting with ‘the old’ has emerged within younger generation of artists or those who enjoy arts and culture. In many cases, with business goals in mind and sociocultural aspirations in heart, they refurbish small aged or not-so-aged houses and brand them as cafes or other cozy gathering places in a more or less vintage style of interior design. And social media marketing helps them to make a living out of that. So, since this practice is partly fashioned from one’s ability to understand

⁸³ from her interviewees’ responses to the question of “what the word heritage meant to them”

⁸⁴ Unlike England, in Iran, there is no National Trust or Iranian Heritage for the middle or higher social classes to actively join in and deliberately engage in the act of heritage conservation that way. But it does not enable them to, for example, feel a sense of great proudness about far history of Persian monarchy of more than 2500 years. This could even sometimes reach to extremes of nationalism, which might actually have a lot more to do with their ego thirst for reclaiming their dignity when meeting and interacting with foreigners, than it does with their intentions for contributing to the conservation of that heritage, as it is much less likely for them to feel the same urge for an ego boost when among their own people. Anyhow, what is apparent is that they identify or wish to identify themselves with the continuity of a grand image of civilizational self that may no longer be within their reach to take credit for. A psychological study is required to dive into the reasons why people choose specific focal points of the past to define who they are and are not, and I am by no means attempting to go there. This is just a caveat of how heritage does the cultural and social work in any society, and besides, it needs not consider the realities and experiences of what is morally and politically correct in today’s world. I find responses of two interviewees in Smith’s study on the 1807 exhibition at Harewood House specially interesting. They were asked about their opinion on the history and legacies of servants and slaves. One said: “the Africans should be apologizing to themselves, if they didn’t catch the slaves we wouldn’t have shipped them”, while the other, a young architect man, said: “we came to see the house, the history of Princess Mary, the royal family, so it’s a very kind of separate issue to visit here, so we kind of passed it by.” As Smith (2009, 48) analyzes these responses, she explains that the country house performance, with those ‘passes by’ opportunities to remember the English slavery, recreates a set of social values that does not fit into what is acceptable today with regard to multiculturalism, racism, and class discrimination.

⁸⁵ “The performance of preservation and conservation is [...] an important aspect of English national identity – the English conserve their past. Or, more specifically, the English middle class conserve the English past. What of course, they are conserving, however, is not simply ‘a house’, but the social values that underpin middle-class deference, social position and place, and, by inference, the social and political position of the elites (Smith, 2009, 45).”

and exploit values of ‘the aesthetic past’, it could, in a sense, be a demonstration of both their and their customers’ middle-class identity⁸⁶. Still, I do not agree that heritage is something boxed up for the elite to discern, concern about, or make use of. Taking the non-elite out of the equation upsets the healthy balance which is only inherent in the natural flow of culture. Answering the question of ‘who conserve the Iranian past?’ is very tricky, because those behind the scenes tend to get easily neglected while some specific others are in the spotlight. Whether we talk of tangible or intangible cultural heritage, social values and meanings are what we are actually talking of, and they continue to live by all people’s being and not only some of them.

Natsuko Akagawa (2016) illustrates how the case of the Ise Shrine in Japan has widely been misunderstood as the example par excellence of heritage conservation via reconstruction. The 20-year cycle of dismantling and reconstruction of its wooden structure has regularly been interpreted and represented as Eastern approach or the traditional Japanese method, also cited as ‘act of sacrifice’, which sets it apart from Western practice of preserving ‘as found’. She argues that understanding the Ise Shrine as a cultural site devoid of its distinct religious and political significance, limits what can be learned from it. In this exceptional case, Akagawa (2016, 23) discusses, “reconstruction represents only part of an entire cycle in which impermanence and renewal are integral elements of the spiritual meaning that constitutes the shrine.” The purpose of this reconstruction is not just for architectural conservation, neither it is only about the transmission of the knowledge of its construction. But rather, there is a deeper relationship to the beliefs⁸⁷ and rituals directly related to the Japanese indigenous religion, Shinto, and its traditional political association with the Japanese state, and in particular, the Japanese Emperor. Without full recognition of such invisible yet unbreakable bonds which are intimately embedded in the traditional social structures, local cultural practices, and spiritual attitudes related to the place and its natural environment, understanding the diversity of cultural expressions would remain limited.

It is now a well-founded claim that non-Western values, and specifically, Asian merits often align with heritage-as-meaning. But this awareness tends to imply a notion of two separate worlds, a rigid East-West binary, which is not adequate in any way in the era of multiculturalism and transnational knowledge. It has to be recognized that meanings assigned to each and every object or practice of heritage significance are, after all, different ways of seeing the world by people who find themselves in different places and cultural contexts. John Tunbridge (in Onciul et al., 2017, 48) poses, in his own words, ‘a thorny question’ to ‘the powerful vested interests in Western heritage officialdom’, “how do you persuade UNESCO, which has only relatively recently acknowledged intangible heritage in a dichotomy with the tangible, that all heritage is meaning and therefore intangible?” With this understanding, trying to further capture and officiate in order to conserve increasingly multifaceted meanings of intangible nature is just beyond the capacity of global frameworks, and may be better off if, from here on, be left to the local communities and heritage practitioners who communicate and work with and for them to sort out what is, to them, the heritage they are committed to safeguard. This, however, is not to suggest that “local people in Asia [or elsewhere] need to be educated by heritage practitioners and governments to properly conserve their heritage (Byrne, 2014).” On the contrary, heritage doers need not to be distracted from the responsibility of educating themselves about the local-popular beliefs and practices which constitute the bedrock of most people’s engagement with the past. Stefano (2012, 235) suggests an ecomuseological approach for

⁸⁶ “Being at, being able – or as it was often expressed, having the ‘privilege’ to visit – a country house and to demonstrate one’s ability to understand its aesthetic social messages and values was a commemoration or demonstration of one’s English middle-class identity (Smith, 2009, 41).”

⁸⁷ The Ise Shrine, in fact, is regarded as the residence of Kami (deity) who continues to live and spend its daily life there. The reconstruction practice, therefore, has distinct meanings based on the perception of the periodic move of kami (deity) to a new residence, and above that demonstrates the shrine’s role in transmitting the multiple elements of traditional Japanese culture to successive generations (Akagawa, 2016).

safeguarding cultural heritage, intangibles in particular, within which the practitioners remain in control of how it is to be safeguarded, as well as by whom. “Ever-changing circumstances are dealt with and decided upon by the owners of intangible cultural heritage and their safeguarding approach can, therefore, remain flexible.”

Schofield (2014, 2) narrows down the wide-reaching ideas on the what-is-ness of heritage to three core principles: heritage is everywhere, heritage is for everyone, and that we are all heritage experts. The archaeologist Cornelius Holtorf (2006, 105) criticizes the scientific canon of “treating the past as a ‘non-renewable resource’ by arguing that ‘every attempt at preserving heritage will necessarily deny the legitimacy of certain uses and engagements with that heritage’ (Alivizatou, 2012, 15).” Heritage these days is not just a responsibility to keep what we inherit from the past intact and pass them on to the future. It used to be about reminding ourselves of the creativity of our ancestors by cherishing a collection of things they created and we received from them, but not so much anymore. Heritage is now, rather, about remembering forward in a way. “It is really a responsibility to continue to be culturally creative, to live, to experience, to feel a kind of security that it is both your place and mine and I think that that is really the most important heritage that we can pass on to those future generations to really make heritage something meaningful for people’s lives (Silberman, 2012).”

3.3.1. Variations between Socio-cultural Flow and Socio-political Orientations

Ashworth (in Onciul et al., 2017, 52) talks of official culture that is and has always been an interest of a minority. He does not find this bothersome much, though, as “the majority has its own counter-culture and even counter-heritage”, he says. For many decades now, there exist some conflicts of interest over resources, modes, and limits of heritage oriented management in many historical urban areas. This is not actually a new challenge in itself. However, bearing the later conceptions of heritage in mind, we are now struggling with much more complicated issues in conservation planning than ever before. These days, we wonder whether/how we could really make heritage something meaningful for people’s lives, acknowledging that heritage is and should be all about (re)creating, (re)experiencing, remembering back and remembering forward who we are. Gibson and Pendlebury (2009, 3) express their concern about “one of the key issues for contemporary heritage management [that] is how to ensure that it is democratic while at the same time ensuring that the heritage profession does not become a ‘government poodle’⁸⁸?”

It has been overly discussed that heritage does not ‘have’ value, but rather heritage is a sociocultural process that is about recreating, negotiating, and transmitting certain values (Smith, 2009). Values are to the core a culture’s philosophy, spirituality, and cosmology that a society or sections of a society wish to preserve and pass on. Heritage, in this sense, has a social affect through the way those values are defined and experienced. In other words, heritage is a sociocultural performance, a platform ultimately not for the management of things, but concerned with the management of social values and cultural meanings. Heritage values and meanings exist in the minds of individuals anyways, but become known in the public domain only when communities choose to disclose them as such. Without communities to embrace cultural meanings they share, heritage as a process cannot foster the sense of community and promote social cohesion (Tunbridge in Onciul et al., 2017, 49), if that is meant to be the aim of heritage conservation. Heritage values and meanings, therefore, cannot emerge “as the subject of archives that needs to be written down and preserved for an indefinite future but rather as cultural practices that are renegotiated by practising communities (Alivizatou, 2012, 18).” The challenge for heritage officialdom is to engage in new ways of thinking and working around cultural

⁸⁸ West, C., and Smith, C. (2005). “WE ARE NOT A GOVERNMENT POODLE”*: Museums and social inclusion under New Labour. *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, 11(3), 275-288.

* Neville McKay, Resource’s first chief executive, quoted in Suggitt (2000, p. 27)

heritage as a living process that is not shielding forgotten or abandoned practices but reflective of the continuity of ever-changing identities, cultures, and philosophies of the past into the future. Maintaining this continuity should be the main purpose of any conservation activity, as it “provides direct and dynamic interaction, which is an essential prerequisite for meaning construction (Abu-Khafajah and Rababeh, 2012, 73).” Hence, having got this viewpoint, the role of ordinary people and their everyday social practices need to be taken into serious consideration.

Amin and Thrift (2002, 4) suggest “to move on from a politics based on nostalgia for a lost past of tightly knit and spatially compact urban communities – which still so often crops up in writings on the good city – to something different.” Ashworth (in Onciul et al., 2017, 51) expresses his caution with the term ‘community’ and reminds that only some of many communities have a spatial dimension but most do not. He continues, “there is, however, one type of ‘community’ that has had a persistent presence not only in my work but in my life: that is, the reactions of localities to the actions of governments that they perceive to be threatening.”

The force of power and economics is usually referred to as the force that harnesses people’s individual yearnings and persuades them what is right in terms of the ways in which their wants and desires might be realized, and cultural matters are no exception to this. Zukin (2010), offering a sobering update of Jacobs’ legendary 1961 book⁸⁹, cares for authentic urban places⁹⁰ that are usually judged by their look, or simply based on their aesthetics, and the experience they host. Such places - marketed by media as good places to live in - not only appeal to cultural consumers, but they also have a lot to do with state power and financial capital. Political will that operates through laws and regulations, in large part, guides urban changes. Be that as it may, power is “a mobile, circulating force which through the constant re-citation of practices, produces self-similar outcomes, moment by moment. This is power based on momentum, rather than inscription. It is power conceived as power to, rather than power over (Amin and Thrift, 2002, 105).” This means, with every urban practice and by each urban encounter, citizens are in the play of power just like governments are.

3.3.2. The Case of Tehran

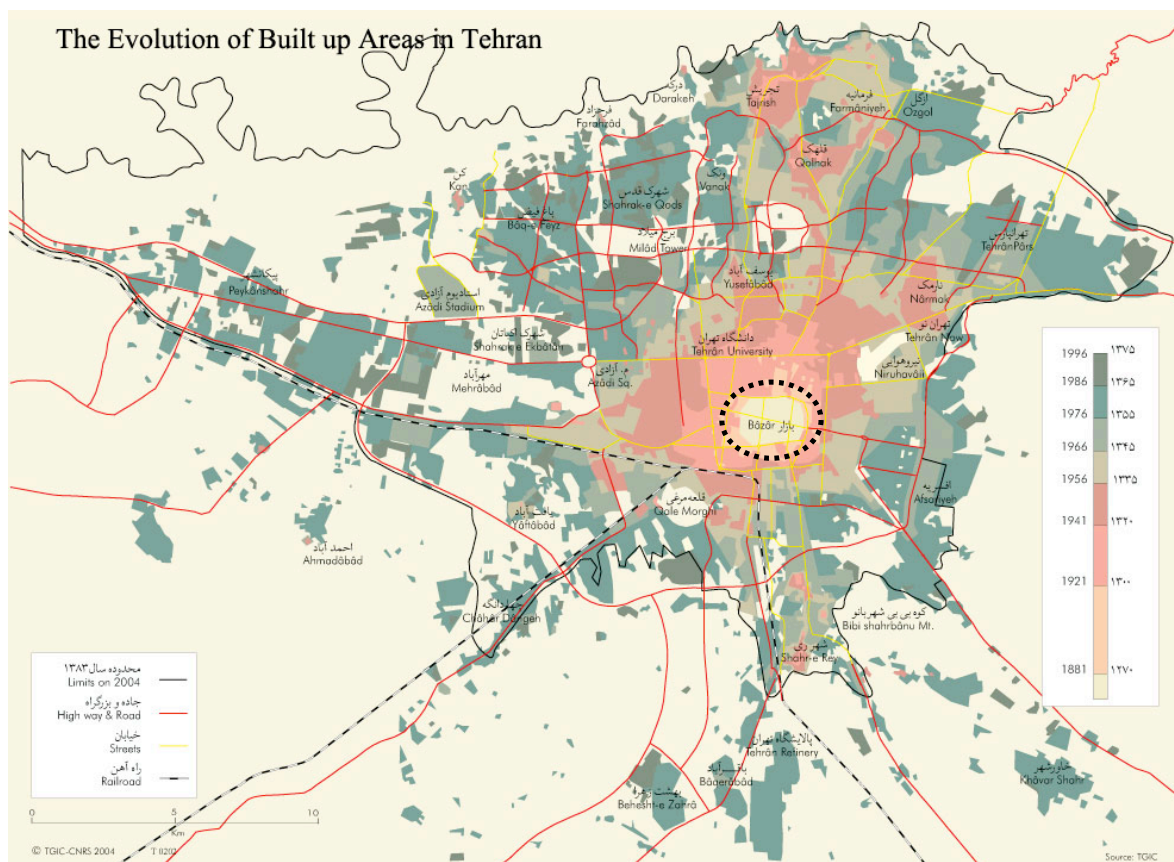
There is so much to say about historical background of Tehran and its transformation since it was one of the villages of the city Rey back in the 3rd century AH, but that is not what this research is about. Therefore, in large part, I simply skip such information with the knowledge that anyone interested could find plenty resources and books in that regard. My research walks another route to deepen our

⁸⁹ Zukin (2010, 227) highlights Jacobs’s realization of “the force of money and state power”; her belief that ‘gradual’ money i.e., “small amounts of residents’ savings invested in individual houses will save a neighborhood from decline; dramatic infusions of capital investment, especially in state-funded urban renewal projects, will destroy both residents’ homes and the fine-grained texture of neighborhood life.” However, Zukin (2010, 227) claims that Jacobs failed to acknowledge “that gradual investments by highly educated, higher income people like herself might, over time, grease the wheels of developers’ high-stakes, large-scale projects, even without concerted planning by the state. Neither did she blame developers, except for Robert Moses, the public sector entrepreneur, when it is they rather than the planners who work for them whose financial priorities move investment capital around.” Zukin (2010, 227-228) moreover points that “despite her good intentions, Jacobs’s ideal vision of urban life has shaped two important vehicles that enable developers to pursue their goals: elected officials’ rhetoric of growth and media representations of cultural consumption. Skeptics may scoff that these are only words and images; both together and alone, they lack the power to make material changes in the city’s built environment. These words and images, though, create a language that embodies our desire for a good place to live. In time this language persuades us, or just confirms our belief, that the good life depends on building more cultural attractions to draw tourists to the city, opening more new cafés and boutiques, and restoring more old houses to elegance. These images of the urban good life camouflage a basic conflict. Dependent on both private developers to invest and build and voters to keep them in office, officials walk a fine line between promising support for affordable housing that will help to preserve communities and redevelopment projects that will change them.”

⁹⁰ Zukin’s argument is largely based on the US system of thoughts and actions. She observes how hipster districts and ethnic tourist zones in American cities, for example SoHo and Hoxton, are reinvented by a toolkit of cultural strategies which begins with creating an image to connect an aesthetic view of origins and a social view of new beginnings, but in the process, destroys the original aura of the place.

understanding of the city's now. In chapter 2, I shed light on the actual relationships of power that shape the political economy platform where important decisions about cultural heritage in Iran have been made over three past decades. Looking at the time period between years 1979 and 2015, there, I discuss how management system and national regulations have gradually evolved with regard to cultural heritage conservation in recent Iran. While, the following focuses more on the case of Tehran. With a descriptive and interpretive tone, in this part, I describe and analyze the ways in which practices of main bodies involved in planning the city have affected the perceptions of urban heritage in Tehran and how they led and carried out management plans for historical neighborhoods.

Tehran, the capital city of Iran, is a large modern city with high rise buildings and highways. It is one of those cities which experienced rapid uncontrolled urban growth in its recent history. The urban area of Tehran nowadays is over 730 km² with a population around 9 million. Tehran was way back in mid 16th century of Safavid dynasty a walled city with an area of 19 km² surrounded by a dry moat. It became the capital of Iran in 1796 to be the seat of Qajar dynasty; and began to attract more people and flourish culturally, socially, and economically. Within some decades, the city expanded enough that a new wall with 12 gates was built around it by Naser al-Din Shah⁹¹ who also introduced the first modernizing reforms in Iran. Tehran is currently home to royal complexes as well as numerous precious buildings dated back to the 18-19th century or even before, many of which situated in the heart of contemporary city. There are to date the country's most significant trade centers and many buildings with governmental, educational, religious, and other sociocultural functions some listed as world or national heritage⁹² within city's downtown. However, this former bustling area currently known as urban heritage broadly speaking has a deeply distressed physical structure and fragile socioeconomic status. I elaborate on this in chapter 4.



⁹¹ He was the first Persian monarch to formally visit Europe in 1870s and reportedly influenced by Western cities' lifestyles.

⁹² Grand Bazaar, Golestan Palace, and Imam Khomeini Mosque are just a few examples.

Figure 5: location of Safavid Tehran within Tehran of now

To give a sense of scale, the information below on Tehran:

Area: Urban 730 km² and Metro 1,274 km²

Population (2012): City 8,244,535 and Metro 13,828,365

The effects of political, economic, and sociocultural transitions in Iran of early 20th century manifested themselves in the spatial and architectural changes of cities. Tehran entered a new phase of its recent history when old city fortifications fall victim to the modernization ideas of Reza Shah Pahlavi in 1920s and were demolished in order to build wide straight avenues in and around citadel which cut through the dense and delicate organic urban fabric of historical neighborhoods and left it scarred forever. A few decades fast forward, urban planning started to become an academic and professional matter in the context of Iran. Tehran, as it is known today, has undergone a few decades of actual practices carried out by relevant administration and operation agencies which have been envisioned, planned, designed, and done by professionals. Within the process, not surprisingly but exceedingly, the city fell into a state of neglecting its urban heritage and as a result tarnishing its urban identity. In order to help understand why, below, I first offer an overview on the growth journey of Tehran, this so-called developing mega city.

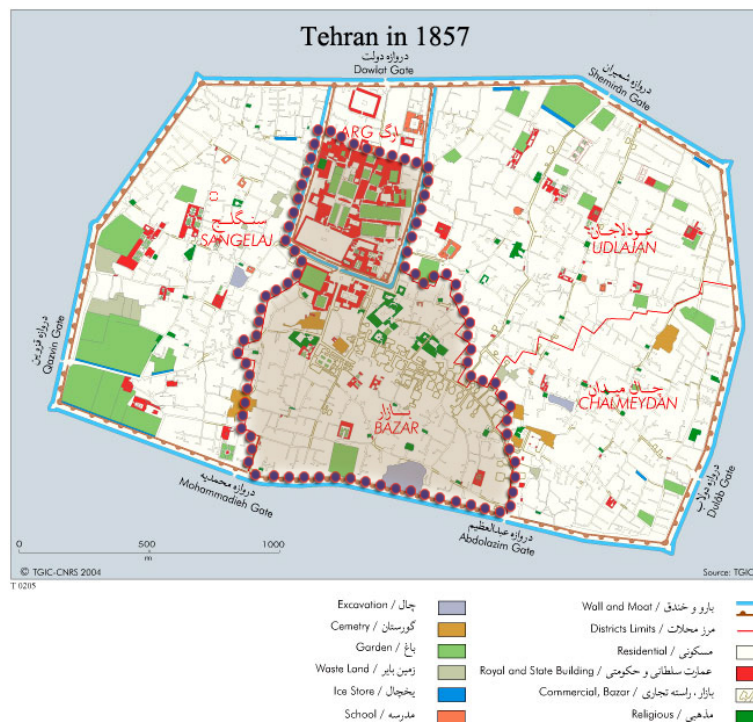


Figure 6: map of old Safavid walled city, showing its five main quarters

Area designated by dotted line embraces Golestan Palace and Grand Bazaar.



Figure 7: map of old Safavid walled city, laid over the contemporary map
Area designated by dotted line embraces the larger case study area.

Tehran, the nowadays large city, witnessed its drastic population growth in a period between 1940s and 1960s, reaching over 2.7 million in 1966. The city has since been experiencing a much slower increase in its total population and with more of a stable growth rate, reaching over 8.7 million in 2016⁹³, although stability in urban development has not yet been achieved. In consequence of crowding, initially, a rapid urban expansion towards outskirts had happened in Tehran itself; and thereafter, it was the surrounding cities, e.g., Karaj, which became larger accommodating Tehran's overflow population. That being said, the overall population of Tehran varies in day and night, as a plethora of people travel to Tehran on a daily basis for work, study, and recreational purposes and return at night to their homes in satellite cities, new towns, and in cases spontaneous settlements near Tehran. Moreover, the day versus night population density of different parts of Tehran demonstrate the massive number of commuters within the city itself.

Outmigration from central Tehran to newer districts had already started in 1960s and accelerated in 1970s, replacing the upper-class locals with incomers mostly of less fortunate groups and immigrants. Until early 1980s, the low price of land in the outskirts of northern Tehran, with a bonus of the appealing microclimate of Alborz⁹⁴ heights, used to be the main motive for wealthy people to rush to those at the time villages and build villas. After urban public services were offered to them, the value of land and properties in those relatively new periphery regions uplifted considerably. That was partly why, in the past few decades, a trend of depopulation in Tehran's central regions⁹⁵ emerged, speeded up, and slowed down later on. It also fomented land speculation in the city and brought forth a decline in concern for the historical center. During the boom of population movements, many bazaaris who used to live in the neighborhoods near Bazaar left their long-time family mansions in pursuit of a life standard which new districts seemed offering; yet they kept running their prosperous businesses in the

⁹³ according to Statistical Centre of Iran [Source: www.amar.org.ir]

⁹⁴ a mountain range in northern Iran stretching along southern coast of the Caspian Sea. Mount Damavand, the highest peak in Iran, is located in the middle of the Alborz range.

⁹⁵ incl. region 12. Historical center of Tehran is currently half part of the municipal region 12.

Bazaar. This was coincident with a wave of emigrations by some other locals who due to political or other reasons left the country short after the victory of Islamic revolution, and followed by internal countrywide immigrations to Tehran during and post Iran-Iraq war; the former leaving behind unoccupied unattended properties in cases that owner had to move abroad within weeks or days, and the latter bringing about all different kinds of pressure on a capital city which was not prepared for. As outcome, a city center depriving of its once strong social structure became a no man's land where gradually formed into city's concentration of work and business. Maintaining the Grand Bazaar as major hub, the number of commercial units, wholesale agencies, administration offices, and various service functions increased; while settlement of population in the area decreased, because many residential units converted into workplaces as well. From a socioeconomic perspective, generally speaking, the city became polarized into north and south areas respectively for higher and lower income residents. Nowadays, residential towers erected in northern Tehran house the rich; whereas people living in Tehran's central regions are of moderate means and those in the southern margins are mostly poor.

What described above provides a brief background on some unplanned changes in Tehran as well as its historical center; unplanned in the sense that they occurred in absence of planning for this part of the city as it fell into a state of neglect by urban governance. In the followings, I bring attention to some planned changes which resulted from (mis)management in the case of Tehran's historical center. Udlajan neighborhood⁹⁶ alone, for years as far as 1980, has been the topic of several urban intervention plans proposed, some officially approved and executed, but none fully realized in implementation phase. The projects ranged in title from improvement plan, organization plan, and renewal plan, through a mixture of those, to urban landscape plan. In content, generally speaking, the projects had much to say on physical/geometrical and technical matters but were not sensitive enough, if not indifferent, about conceptual hurdles. I discuss examples of such projects with a broader look at the power mechanisms which brought them about. I explore their causes and their impacts, rather than analyzing the projects themselves. My intention is to better understand why and how dynamics of city planning in Tehran rather knowingly overlooked historical neighborhoods until very recently, if not still. It is argued that major problems of Tehran's historical center find their roots in one way or another in the fact that the Grand Bazaar and its brisk trade life going on daily vastly dominate the area. It has deeply penetrated adjacent neighborhoods and turned them into a huge manufactory and depository unit at the service of itself, the Bazaar. There exist many aged beautiful but decaying mansions divided into rooms either used as workshops and storages supporting Bazaar or accommodated by immigrant single man workers of Bazaar. In what follows, I first describe why and how this has happened by tracking planned changes with regard to this urban area in Tehran.

In reference to the typically differing motives for heritage conservation and urban development, I bring attention to the major planned changes which resulted from intervention practices in the case of Tehran's historical center. I look at central Tehran as an example of urban built heritage, located in a present time large city, which has undergone a few decades of neglect and mismanagement. While observing Iran's contemporary political economy⁹⁷, I discuss what mechanisms brought about

⁹⁶ known as one of the five main neighborhoods of old Safavid walled city and the wealthiest one till Pahlavi era. Udlajan today is separated into three quarters of Imamzadeh Yahya (east), Pamenar (middle), and Naser Khosro (west), bordered by Sirus St. and Pamenar St., after they cut through the historical neighborhood, following the Act Concerning Building and Widening of Streets and Alleys of 1933 to modernize the streets in Tehran (Madanipour, 1998).

⁹⁷ Taking into consideration major events in different time periods at both scales of country and heritage sector, I write in chapter 2 on my critical review of national regulations, i.e., five development plans of the Islamic Republic of Iran between the years 1989 and 2015, with regard to cultural heritage conservation. Therefore, here, I skip pointing at the evolution of nation scale approaches towards heritage management. Likewise, for the sake of argument's focus, regular supervisory level alterations (e.g., at the presidential office) as well as newer or work in progress structural transformations (e.g., the draft of Urban Management Bill, 2014) and the share of public

substandard buildings reconstructions within the area of central Tehran; and how they impacted not only on the physical, structural, and functional setting but also caused the socio-spatial characteristics of those neighborhoods to downgrade. The idea of this subchapter is to, from one angle, indicate some hidden challenges in the governance of urban heritage in Iran, particularly Tehran's historical center; and, from the other angle, find out the mindset behind some of the actual practices carried out by relevant administration and operation agencies which have been planned and designed by professionals. In addition to my on-field empirical study and desk research on secondary data resources as well as official documents, I make use of semi-structured interviews I conducted with a number of experts. The interviewees were senior professionals and national/local authorities of relevant administration and operation agencies involved in Iran/Tehran's heritage management. However, in fulfilment of the informed consent statement signed by my interviewees and myself as the researcher, all information on individuals, i.e., a total number of 14 persons, and their affiliation are treated confidential and are not publicly available for reference in this dissertation. A synthesis of expert discourse on topics raised in the interviews helped to enrich the content of this work and enhance the accuracy of research findings. Not to mention that what follows is my own description and analysis of the planned changes in historical center of Tehran by tracking some examples of the intervention practices led by main bodies of the management system in past years.

As mentioned before, there has been a tendency to horizontal urbanization in the case of Tehran's metropolitan area. Recently, national level policies⁹⁸ in housing sector endorse a turn of concerns to inner city development and allocate annual budget for 'deteriorated' urban contexts to be revitalized. In the meanwhile, however, deterioration in the historical neighborhoods extended even deeper both environmentally and socioeconomically. To understand the irony, one should notice that the approach on how to revitalize is explicitly by reconstruction, not to mention that the term deteriorated implicitly but mostly refers to the old urban contexts. Going down that road, most renewal projects respond to the urban decay with demolition and reconstruction of the so-called 'problematic' areas in the city center. Restoration of historical buildings or sites through utilization and rehabilitation processes has been practiced at random and as extracurricular projects, yet has not been systematized or systematically established in city level, neither within the structure of organizational routines nor to be exercised by the general public. I expand on this from here on in this chapter, but more specifically in chapter 4 where I provide a flashback to sociocultural, economic, and spatial changes in the case of Tehran's historical center. For that and in order to better understand and shed light on the aims and objectives of heritage conservation policies and legislations in Tehran, I explain through discussing who the main institutional and non-institutional actors involved in those planned changes have been, what role each played, and how they interplayed.

This is important to note that, among numerous bureaucracies involved, Ministry of Roads & Urban Development (MRUD), at national level, and municipalities, at urban level, have always been legally in charge of urban development planning and with that any kind of constructions or planned changes in Iranian cities. They not only are those who actually have executive roles, but also enjoy a comparatively high amount of budget. In the specific case of central Tehran, there are plenty of registered buildings and monuments listed as Iranian national heritage. However, the urban fabric itself as a united entity has not overall been well protected against destructive changes. This situation leaves almost the whole package of urban planning to the municipality of Tehran. Since the historical

awareness and concern about heritage (e.g., rise in the number of heritage-led NGOs and their activities) are not directly and in details discussed in this segment.

⁹⁸ e.g. article no. 171 of Laws of the 5th Economic, Social, and Cultural Development Plan of the Islamic Republic of Iran (2011-2015) which required Ministry of Housing and Urban Development and municipalities to annually revitalize and reconstruct at least 10% of urban deteriorated contexts. The same article also required the government to allocate at least 50% of resources, credits, and facilities of housing sector to such projects.

center of Tehran is currently half part of a municipal region, i.e., region 12, situated at the heart of the contemporary city, Municipality of Region 12 has always been legally in charge of any planned change in this urban area. Besides, it is important to know that heritage conservation is a quite new term entered the literature of urban planning professionals in Iran only a decade or so ago. Therefore, it is no wonder that hasty development decisions intensely scarred the original core of city formation in the past and left many not-undo-able marks. It is worth mentioning that Tehran has circa 2250 hectares approved and authorized historical context.

It might be more likely for a historical building or site not to be eradicated if it is officially registered as national heritage; since it becomes legally protected against harmful alterations, and above that any sort of planned change has to be supervised by ICHTO. However, as past experiences have shown, even those listed as national heritage not always survive let alone thrive. First, because ICHTO cannot afford to purchase and restore all of them, a large percentage of registered buildings or sites stay under private ownership. Second, as registration requires the private owner to follow ICHTO's lead in every step from then on, most of them end up selling their houses, and some of them either move out and do nothing at all or simply keep staying and do not much for bettering the condition of their building, and with that the registered building or site slips into a gradual death. There exist many other cases of historical one or two story mansions which have not yet been registered as national heritage, but could be in near future as they possess features considered valuable according to ICHTO criteria. These are mostly threatened by the developers' temptations to get rid of them in replacement with something trouble free and profitable; which might explain why so many entrance ornaments, facade details, and interior decorations were deliberately tarnished throughout the past few decades. Almost the same rationale applies to Cooperation Foundation of NAJA⁹⁹ when purchased properties from private owners of residential and commercial plots, but eventually accomplished no better than either adding to many newly built four floor low quality apartment buildings or expanding the brown fields scattered around the area. In short, by a walk through inner neighborhoods of Tehran's historical center, one could observe that the common motive for most renewal projects has been complete demolition and building an apartment block instead, in most cases even no land readjustment or land consolidation was arranged.

Economic reasons aside, one of the main grounds for failure of protection bulbs¹⁰⁰ in the case of Tehran is the sectoral ego within institutional structure when it comes to urban management, e.g., in the municipality, construction department and social department work separately instead of in collaboration with each other. ICHTO is known as 'limitations' maker for its classic approach of national heritage listing and freezing/museumizing historical areas¹⁰¹. It is perceived to be strict, inflexible, too conservative, passive, and avoiding the issue of economic profitability. While, executive hands in the city are busy with construction routines and show minimum, if not no, interest in taking long term non-operational processes and entering cross territorial dialogues. For urban development planning holders, historic areas are an annoying troublesome burden. As they are not expected to be caring or responsible about heritage issues, they simply keep eyes closed on them and throw the ball to the opponent. In order to better illustrate how both attitudes avoid attending a deeper understanding

⁹⁹ The Law Enforcement Force of the Islamic Republic of Iran, or Disciplinary Force of the Islamic Republic of Iran; abbreviated in Persian as NAJA, is the uniformed police force in Iran.

¹⁰⁰ Not only there are hundreds of buildings and sites registered as national heritage located in Safavid central Tehran (of about 300 hectares), each subject to immediate buffer zone and other protective limitations; in 2006, ICHTO listed historical context of Udlajan neighborhood as national heritage (registration number 15381) and announced that any intervention in this specific area (of about 150 hectares) has to be first consulted and approved by them.

¹⁰¹ Generally speaking, it appears that heritage management in Iran since 1930s has aimed on first, recognition and presentation of national patrimonies as ascribed heritages and second, preserving whatever they decided those national heritages are. Preservation has generally been known as the ultimate aim, while activating the heritage properties has seldom been considered as a crucial step in the process.

of historical areas, I give an example. Since 2005, Urban Renewal Organization (URO) of Tehran Municipality has been responsible for renovating urban contexts and retrofitting them against earthquake. This organization identified 'distressed and inappropriate' urban contexts in Tehran and came up with renewal plans for several of them. The plans were framed in some preset fixed terms of reference, meaning that the project charter would bear no difference in the planning approach whether targeting historical areas, including those located in the city center, or otherwise. One of the plans, entitled Organization Plan of Udlajan Neighborhood, proposed some physical changes contradictory with conservation requirements, so that had to abort in the execution phase; because with registration of Udlajan neighborhood as national heritage in 2006, no new construction higher than 7.5 meters was permitted in the area. This example and many other similar conflicts, first, highlight a duality of heritage conservation and urban development within relevant agencies and, second, suggest that they are not on the right track of communicating and collaborating one with the others. The latter issue actually finds its roots in the ideas and ideals of the two seemingly opposing representations. While the conservators' side finds itself the solo guardian of 'historic' urban areas, the doers' side finds itself annoyed by the burden of the very same 'troublesome' urban areas; while the former does not have the capacity for determining how such urban areas should be dealt with in city plans, the latter who in fact draws urban design sheets marks them with buffer patches and expects the opponent to say what to do inside those polylines. Back to the example of Udlajan neighborhood, after many property owners complained, in 2011 a revision of the aforementioned construction code was approved which lightened the limitation to a maximum height of 7.5, 10.5, or 12 meters; depending on zoning plans¹⁰², conditioned upon no change in land use and passage width, and a facade passed decent by ICHTO experts. The years in between, however, witnessed the increasing number of demolished plots, abandoned buildings reoccupied by the homeless, addicts, and wrongdoers, and historical houses turned into warehouses which altogether did intensify the situation in Udlajan neighborhood and overall in the city center for the worst. Even if the conservators and the doers have got not much in common, they share an obsession with physicality; whether to keep or to renew, it has allowed little room for thinking outside the box. In regard with the example above, it is questionable that watching over the two-dimensional look, i.e., the face of buildings, would suffice to safeguard a historical context. Besides, is the insistence on fixating narrow pathways supposed to preserve the morphology of such urban fabric? Assuming that morphology is considered here as heritage value, the idea of transforming the Udlajan neighborhood into a 'museum town'¹⁰³ raises several other questions and doubts around whether the way to go should be freezing a yet living part of Tehran to sculpture how it used to look like for the posterity. And if so has been decided, it still cannot be achieved through merely physical considerations and prescriptions. Although conservation of Tehran's urban heritage stands as the motto of its latest management system, the question still remains that what heritage is being cared about. While main streets and renowned public realms attract the most attention of management body, how adequate the historical context is being thought about. Getting back to the primary point of this research, based on what Tehran has been doing thus far, an inference could be drawn that relevant institutions do not follow a people-centered view on heritage. Public participation hardly ever goes beyond a slogan phrase used in official documents. They so often serve property owners with some incentive facilities from local banks for rebuilding. Still, this policy does not appeal to people much. Several explanations could be given for the failure of this strategy such as the high

¹⁰² as defined by the current detailed plan of Tehran (2012), which is a strategic document for urban management and a basis for all plans in the city. It was developed under Tehran Municipality's Deputy of Architecture and Urban Development. In 2014, the deputy assigned Tehran's Management Office of Historical Context and Buildings to oversee the revision procedure of the detailed plan specifically for historical Tehran.

¹⁰³ In 2012, this idea was publicized as an effort to preserve Udlajan's historical identity and restore its vitality. The term 'museum town' does not, in this case, refer to an urban quarter where hosts many museums; rather, it suggests a location where is worth visiting simply because it portrays the past in appearance. The first attempt with this regard was restoration of Udlajan market passage as a partnership practice, which took more than three years to cover the pathway with traditional arched roof and make some other physical improvements with the purpose of promoting handicrafts and tourism businesses.

percentage of residential or commercial plots under rent. However, as discussed, involving people in heritage conservation should be tried in various innovative ways compatible with the context specifications. The other point is that residents, either owner or tenant, should equally be heard and included. But, conservation attempts have not yet credited this with enough attention.

Another point is even though the historical urban fabrics, e.g., Udlajan neighborhood, have theoretically been seen as whole entities of concern, it seems that the knowledge and more so the dedication required for treating them as such in practice have not yet been updated accordingly. There are many successful examples of revival of single historical buildings or complexes, in Tehran and across the country, where now refunction as museums, restaurants, hotels, and so on. Those owned and invested by public sector aside, not too many are initiated and implemented by nonpublic stakeholders for several reasons amongst which a few discussed above. Best practices led by Revitalization and Utilization Fund for Historical Cultural Buildings and Places¹⁰⁴, which realized a policy alteration from centralized governmental approaches, i.e., top down non participatory policies, towards decentralized participatory approaches, are still counted to be only a very narrow margin of reportedly over one million potential sites. Tax and duty free renovation and refunctioning has just recently been introduced to the public, but are still not being exercised by the municipality fully, nor even in a satisfactory manner. Even far less cases come to mind of historical urban fabrics where have been under a slow but steady process of revitalization, e.g., Jolfa, the Armenian quarter in Esfahan. In Tehran, it is safe to claim there is so far none at that level of impact, except for some street based projects limited to pedestrianization techniques, e.g., 30th Tir street. One of valuable research projects on central Tehran, completed in 2010, is called Feasibility Study for Creating Walkable Spaces in the Historic Centre of Tehran¹⁰⁵. This project, although only at strategical level to define a pedestrianized network, could give a good instance of how to go about bringing the much-needed change of view at the central Tehran and its many potentialities. In that sense, the project was successful and also inspiring for other cities in Iran.

Looking for causes of the noticeable gap between theory and practice regarding how to work on the historical urban fabrics, one of the most relevant arguments is over outlook and output of experts actively thinking about and doing interventions at levels above singular buildings or complexes. To start with, urbanism is the rarest specialty to be found among experts working at ICHTO; while archaeologists, historians, and architectural conservators predominate the human resources of this highest ranked organization of its kind in the country. This simple fact explains a lot how come historical structure of urban contexts has been understood and acknowledged way too less and later than what has been the case for historical spots. As much as the necessity of wearing the urban lens in order to deal with the complicated nexus of a historical setting in a contemporary city seems self-evident thanks to the recent literature, it is still a real struggle for many cities, Tehran included, to develop preconditions and technical capacities for that to be performed in practice. Although the statute of ICHTO, approved in 1988, recognizes its role in decision making cycle as assessor and commenter on all urban development plans, e.g., comprehensive and detailed plans, its delegates are hardly given the opportunity to question the substantial concepts which those plans propose, largely

¹⁰⁴ founded in 2005, obeying Laws of the 4th Economic, Social, and Cultural Development Plan of the Islamic Republic of Iran (2005-2009), as a non-profit institution affiliated to ICHTO. Aiming to attract investments by domestic or foreign private and cooperative sectors, the main duty of this institution is to identify proper land-use and grant licenses for exploitation of historical cultural buildings and places in compliance with the relevant rules and regulations.

¹⁰⁵ Tehran Municipality commissioned Negin Shahr Ayandeh (NESHA) Consulting Engineers, in collaboration with Shabdar Consulting Engineers, to work on a strategic plan for 400 hectares of central Tehran. This project looked at the street from pedestrian point of view and put emphasize on understanding of hidden and separated layers of urban life and tried to build a network out of these scattered islands. In the meantime, "Khat-e-11" group (Tehran Experimental Workshop) were formed that originated from pedestrian-oriented attitude of the team. "Khat-e-11" directed participation of citizens in public life and helped to form a coherent urban life network. [Source: <http://neginshahravandeh.com/view/en/project.aspx?id=16>]

because urban studies outstays their expertise. By acting on Laws of the 3rd Economic, Social, and Cultural Development Plan of the Islamic Republic of Iran (2000-2005), as stated in chapter 2, ICHTO has been engaged in Iran's Supreme Council of Architecture and Urbanism and also Commission Number 5 in Tehran and other large cities. Its representatives, as members of such boards, have legally since 2000 been given voice in planning management. However, signing the city plans by them has mostly been a matter of formality rather than a claim on power in urban management. It is while, on the other side of the negotiation table, the plans are presented by a group of urban experts, including: economists, engineers, planners, architects, etc., for whom heritage issues normally stands outside of their spheres of discipline and interest. That aside, urban practitioners are supposed to work under the regulations and within the frameworks which do not actually give them any responsibility for heritage protection whatsoever, except for to enquire about listed national heritages from ICHTO. This is basically why although in the research report of all urban projects there is a chapter on the historical background of the case area, such evidences hardly weight as much in the last chapters where conclude with action plan scenarios and execution details. In my opinion, the underlying reason for such pattern in the projects is partly the mentality of urban experts who serve as consultants to the city authorities. As for instance, Tehran Municipality has started in 2012 to implement the current detailed plan of Tehran produced by a number of consulting engineering companies from the most reputable ones in the country. It is prepared for the city's 22 municipal regions in a total of 690 sheets of 1:2000 land use plans defining four zones of residential, services/activities, mixed, and green areas. In 2014, resulting from a series of debates on the detailed plan for historical Tehran, it was decided that a revision has to be made. In a booklet published by Tehran's Management Office of Historical Context and Buildings, some of the shortcomings are named including: inattention to civic life in the historical context; dominance of physical dimensions over sociocultural, economic, and infrastructural dimensions of the intervention approach; ineffectiveness of zoning code for some parts and its indetermination for some others; and so on. The document, in my blunt words, generally implies that a community of urban experts, most probably because of their lack of sensitivity to the context of Iranian urban society and the conditions of Tehran's urban development, shows no reaction to past structures and no concern for their social structure. They tend to fail in this attempt to plan the future changes in historical Tehran and to guide the development of the city as a whole. As the municipality plays a role merely in the implementation of urban plans, rather than generating or revising them, the relevance of mentality and knowledge of experts who come up with schemes for planned changes in the city should not be underrated. This is, however, not to exculpate an urban management that in their eagerness to short term success, they largely care about statistics of projects carried on within their duty period, so that they tend to be impatient and overlook long term orientation and lasting qualities. Obviously, while speaking about the perceptions of main management bodies on themselves and the others, what I am trying to suggest here focuses more on the shortcomings, but my intention is not to be overly negative or minimize the worth of the good works that have also been done. This is just a report on the average stand of the majorities. Otherwise, we all know that with the mistakes comes a better clarity, and that things eventually get better, as they always do.

Reviewing the sequence of unplanned and planned changes in historical center of Tehran indicates that this heritage area of contemporary city has fallen into a few decades of urban decay largely resulted from the officials' neglect and mismanagement in different time periods. Among the principal threats for Tehran's historical context have been, first, the lack of an integrated, coherent, and effective urban management system capable of striking the right balance between cultural heritage conservation and urban development planning and, second, the predominantly physical interventions dismissing unique characteristics of the setting and their meanings, potentials, and impacts. As argued, after decades of rapid uncontrolled urban peripheral growth, Tehran has just lately been reaching some sort of stability in terms of city expansion and with that made a turn into urban revitalization policies for historical neighborhoods. However, strategies and programs developed to achieve such aim in practice

have not been that successful so far. This research study highlights that the demands of current life hand in hand with the urge of economic profitability have inevitably motivated and directed the renewal practices as to be demolition and reconstruction projects, rather than restoration and utilization processes, in the case of historical buildings and sites in neighborhoods of Tehran's historical center. In a pretty much top down urban planning system new to decentralized participatory approaches, private owners of historical properties still find themselves in opposition to state authorities responsible for heritage conservation. Similarly, the contradiction of interests exists between the conservators and the developers within institutional structure of urban management forces itself. Moreover, a gap between theory and practice regarding how to work on the historical urban fabrics could be identified at relevant administration and operation agencies. In that respect, mentality and knowledge of urban experts in addition to management's tendency towards short term plans and physical oriented projects are found to be other factors in inadequacy of intervention practices already experienced in the historical urban fabrics of Tehran.

4. Neighborhood as Cultural Heritage

Like previously described, the field of cultural heritage studies has just lately been witnessing that multiple views of heritage, of what matters and why, take the discourse-defined borders beyond the conventional boundaries of heritage. Everyone, academically or practically involved, is more or less informed about how the very concept has and is being realigned constantly. The more recent conceptualizations inspire new contents for heritage to transform the established understanding of heritage “from the special and the exceptional places and things, to the everyday (Schofield, 2014, 1).” According to David Lowenthal’s words in a talk about the imminent release of his updated version of *The Past Is a Foreign Country*, “there is a move away from authenticity to experience (Edwards and Wilson, 2014, 108).” This stream of thoughts is where I, as an architect and urban designer, resonate with the most.

The general notion is that culture is of a more immaterial nature than cultural heritage, because it seems that, due to the perceived ‘boundedness’ of cultural heritage, it is materiality of distinct physical structures that is in a conjoined relationship with history and the past (Josefsson and Aronsson, 2016, 2095). But I, as explained in the chapters before, rather perceive cultural heritage as meanings or contents; even more so, as meanings or contents in the context of real life everyday experience. I cannot agree more with AlSayyad (2001, 2), in his discussion on urban identity and cultural hybridity, that it is only in the context of everyday practices, or the complex nature of places in daily lived experience¹⁰⁶, that it becomes possible to unravel complex cultural notions. Thrift (2004) considers the relationship between place and human emotions, and theorizes the different ways in which a place can, often subconsciously, be interpreted. For me, urban heritage has everything to do with the trinity of relationship between place, people, and activities/events as the three mingle together and bring about first hand everyday experiences with the living past. I build my argument on two main suppositions. First, “it is meaning that gives value, either cultural or financial, to heritage (Graham and Howard, 2008, 2).” Second, taking Dovey’s suggestion¹⁰⁷, it is not only about how we experience ‘being-in-the-world’, but also about how we live ‘becoming-in-the-world’. That is to say, I am mostly interested in nonmaterial aspects of cultural heritage which would touch people in subconscious levels of awareness and knowing, i.e., those qualities that are actually, in my opinion, the cornerstone of any heritage value categories, but have not nearly enough been addressed in reality of heritage practice. I call them the contents of cultural heritage with people or the meanings of heritage things to people, no matter tangible things or intangible things. That is why I similarly find the nonphysical traits of built environment as important, if not the most important, for example when we think about the concept of Mahalle¹⁰⁸ in Iranian context. In my research on cities from heritage perspective, particularly on the case of Tehran, my ‘working concept’ of Mahalle, which roughly translates to the word neighborhood in English, could be best explained through the importance of the relationships between people and place through daily activities. I explore the rendezvous of people and whatever cultural heritage could be for them in neighborhood areas of an old city to see how meanings are being generated as the result of daily experiences and interactions. Reaching for a better understanding of people’s viewpoints about their neighborhood, could not only cast light over how the locals relate themselves to vernacular ideological foundations and authenticity of each individual case but it would also help in heritage

¹⁰⁶ In social anthropology, sense of place or “sense of self-in-place”, as Cantrill and Senecah (2001) call it, is evoked precisely to explore the difficult to grasp ‘livedness’ of place (Stewart, 1996), which talks about places as they are experienced through everyday life. What is central to this perspective is the view that cultural meanings of place are not universal but specific to particular societal groups. Such meanings are not simply an extra dimension, less important than more obvious forms of representation such as religion or class; they are inseparable from it.

¹⁰⁷ “I suggest we replace the Heideggerian ontology of being-in-the-world with a more Deleuzian notion of becoming-in-the-world. [...] I also suggest we replace the division of subjectivity-objectivity or people-environment with Bourdieu’s concept of the habitus as an embodied world (Dovey, 2009, 6).”

¹⁰⁸ both historically and currently, an official urban administrative unit in many Middle Eastern countries, including Iran.

practice by leading to more sensible recommendations. Rather than predetermining place relationships through the use of scales and indicators, people should be allowed to themselves define place, thus allowing an understanding of what engagement with place might mean for an individual.

4.1. The Sentiments of Everyday Heritage

“Culture is everything we don’t have to do.

Culture consists of the gratuitous stylistic extras that we add to the things we do have to do. You have to eat, but you don’t have to decorate elaborately prepared curries with silver leaf. You have to move around, but you don’t have to dance.

Culture is a biological drive for humans. It is not something that we just add on at the end, after we’ve dealt with all those survival problems, but something we keep doing all the time.”

— Brian Eno

The bonus attention given to urban environments specifically city centers in the last decades, by both scholars and practitioners, acknowledges that heritage conservation has to be integrated with urban development policies. We are way over that time when every country wanted to show off by another Pyramids of Giza. Instead, the focal point of attention changed to ‘old towns’ in many European cities, for instance. City centers, as known today in Europe, depict a profile of the city’s past(s) by preserving its historical buildings as far as possible. While, the transformational changes in these areas are mostly centered upon urban functions, infrastructure, and services. The line of reasoning would be that they have been planned to turn into commercial and/or administrative urban hubs accommodated in rather aged buildings. As a consequence of such decision, nowadays, they very often lack residential use; and if otherwise, the housing units are restricted to upper floors only. Hence, not entirely but mostly, these old towns cannot be considered as places of normal everyday dwelling in the city. One may argue that they can, however, still be seen as familiar places for a variety of target groups who visit them regularly or occasionally for several reasons other than residence. Although it is true, I think, almost like the way museums are intended for heritage promotion, the momentum of market-induced recognition weighs heavily on the slow and steady brewed connection between people and place in the case of old towns. Another example of remarketing the city center areas through intended transformations is gentrified neighborhoods, which could be called a rephrased copy of European old towns. Despite all the debates over the disadvantages of gentrification¹⁰⁹, turning the old residential neighborhoods into gentrified quarters is still in fashion, in Turkish large touristic cities for instance. Albeit it is evident that gentrification is a socioeconomic, and seldom a planned for, process which may be advanced by certain policies.

Although European old towns come across as being a well-fitting solution for their own context, there is no doubt that not every other context should be treated in the same way with some similar grounds. In Tehran, initiated by the city authorities, there have been some random attempts to revive a number of old courtyard houses and traditional public baths. It was decided for them to refunction as offices,

¹⁰⁹ “For the past few decades Destination Culture has offered a general model of a city’s new beginnings in postindustrial production and leisure consumption. It suits real estate developers who seek to encourage the high value of urban land, especially in the center, by converting it to high-rent uses and appeals to a younger generation who trend toward an aesthetic rather than a political view of social life. Cities invest in different forms of Destination Culture, most often building spaces of consumption for shopping, museum hopping, or entertainment, but also building spaces of production such as artists’ studios, live-work lofts, and cultural hubs. With media buzz and rising rents, these spaces shift the city, one neighborhood at a time, from traditional manufacturing to arts and crafts production, and then to cultural display, design, and consumption, testing the market for higher rents and creating “new” space for more intensive uses. Like *The Gates*, all forms of Destination Culture are judged according to their financial results. In the end upscale development triumphs over authenticity, whether that is the authenticity of origins or of new beginnings (Zukin, 2010, 237).”

restaurants, art galleries, and so forth. Quite a few of houses were to become local branches of larger municipal offices providing mainly managerial and executive but also sociocultural services to the public. However, this partial almost distorted copy of the European old towns idea was not that successful in neighborhoods of central Tehran, mostly because these buildings are located in an unhealthy decaying environment. The same attempt practiced in a couple of other neighborhoods with different conditions to start with, though, turned out to ignite positive consequences for enhancing their immediate surrounding and pave the way to improvement of the whole urban area in the longer run. So, first to remember is that safeguarding an urban environment could be attained not simply by arbitrary interventions in the physicality of its fabric but by addressing its current needs which are rooted in the social and economic setting. And second, what we, individually or collectively, want to preserve and pass on to the next generations is too vast of a range and varies depending on the person or the group of people expressing their interest. But the point here is that historical centers of many contemporary Mideast cities, e.g., neighborhoods of central Tehran¹¹⁰, have always so far been lived-in heritage, i.e., housings in which people settle. Most of the people who reside in them are neither only daytime users of stores and offices nor a replaced community of the wealthy, some one-week tourists, or different sorts of minorities like artists and so on. Instead, by and large, most of the inhabitants of downtown Tehran are still local families, although mainly from lower income social groups. These residential neighborhoods have unfortunately degraded a lot in the last decades, resulting from outmigration of early residents and reduction in housing availability as many buildings transformed into warehouse uses in service to the Grand Bazaar. Despite noticeable increase in vulnerable households, large parts of the most historical but distressed inner-city neighborhoods in Tehran have to be understood as residential, simply because they yet are. Back to heritage topic, then, there is already a sleeping potential for everyday heritage which could again come alive, only if people are given more than a passive role of ignored occupants. “Heritage, one might suggest, is as much about people as it is about place (Schofield, 2014, 1-2).” However, this is not the only rationale behind the necessity of attending to everyday heritage debate in my discussion.



Figure 8: a narrow residential alley in Udlajan neighborhood, central Tehran
[Photo Credit: Ahmadreza Lotfi]

¹¹⁰ Bazaar and Arg neighbourhoods aside, as they have been and are mainly non-residential

To better understand how people and place are intertwined matters in the heritage scope, digging deeper into those interpretations of heritage ‘by people’ and ‘with people’ sounds irresistible. They are equally significant, not only in relation to current heritage discourses particularly but also in regard with methodological approaches applied in heritage projects most recently. One of the main dimensions to this theme is the extent to which people’s memories of a place and their experiences in that place generate interest and bind them together. This judgment would be valid for short term stays as well. Imagine the typical example of “tourists snapping away with cameras; they don’t always seem interested in the building they are looking at. They just want to create the memories (Edwards and Wilson, 2014, 110).” However, for the sake of my argument’s focus on the people who reside in a historical urban area, I would rather pursue the assumption that “objects in the built environment are vivified by their involvement in the drama of our lives (Byrne, 2013, 596).” Byrne in his interesting paper concluded with raising the issue of empathy and how objects and places, as transmitters of affect, reflect on us even if only imaginatively for aftermath visitors. I wish to add to this, that people’s relations with place and also things in place - nearly irrespective of possessing prior knowledge about their age or heritage values - alone can load up people’s memory with experimental affect, by their association with day-to-day events in the ‘contemporary past’ of those people’s lives. With a critical look on heritage lists and registers (of objects, places, and practices), one may rather easily see that how ‘second life’ given to heritage things could “remove them from the realm of the everyday and exhibit them as fragments and relics of a threatened past or present (Harrison, 2013a, 582).” Whereas, it was earlier discussed how important it is for them, i.e., heritage things, to get caught up in the everyday. Josefsson and Aronsson (2016, 2095), [according to data from an interview setting in the National History Museum in Tirana, Albania], argue that some of the interviewees could not see the role of heritage in the present time at all, because there seems to be a gap between the nonacademic understanding of the concept of heritage, i.e., the everyday and the academic concept of heritage. It is moreover noteworthy that without active involvement in ongoing social exchange, the officially labeled heritages will be deprived of meaningful life and the society from which they came will gradually be impaired. Besides, as Hawke (2012, 240) puts it, “if heritage is conceptualised as a notion that combines place, identity and temporality, then these accounts make a case for ordinary and everyday places to be included within the heritage discourse.”

In a couple of paragraphs above, I discuss whether and the extent to which the concept of everyday heritage could fit with the characteristics of the inner cities in countries like Iran, and what it brings to the table of discussion, perceiving them as such. It simply boosts the proposition that people’s everyday practice of living in the historical neighborhoods and their perceptions about them have to be taken much more seriously in any sort of heritage-related management. Following these thoughts, I bring the question of: what does everyday stand for, when relating it to urban heritage? how is it different to aim heritage conservation at place conservation through everyday activities? and what conflicts would emerge along the way? I further talk about the historical center of contemporary Tehran and examine how far it is/has been standing from fulfilling this concept. I do not contend that what I state embody everything which matter, nor claim I that they are commonly believed. Rather, I consider them to be few starting points for thinking differently about inhabited heritage. Once more, I should stress that I generally base my thoughts on Iran as a sample – not a representative – of Middle Eastern countries.

Historical public spaces, as generate urban life streaming through

In theory, there have been several visions of ideal urban life proposed, imagining what makes a good city. Influenced by Jane Jacobs’s ideas on urban neighborhoods, for example, it all comes down to mixing old and new buildings, limiting the scale of many streets, and assuring a diversity of uses that attracts people 24/7. Communal spaces in cities and residential areas become meaningful and attractive, as Jan Gehl (2011) suggests, when all activities of all types (necessary activities, optional activities, and social activities) occur in combination and feed off each other. It has, historically since

ever, been the case for public spaces of nearly all pre-modern cities where people mingle with one another on a daily basis. Still today, comparing to some historical buildings scattered in a city, it is the city's historical public spaces that should be considered as sincere means of revealing the society's self-identity¹¹¹, usually without being assigned to do so. It just comes with them as a bonus. In actual fact, they often provide the venue for display of contemporary everyday urban life activities which evolve from past generations into future generations. This is exactly unlike museums and other so-called monuments, as they depict a frozen-up nostalgic look of the past by providing some people-free snapshots mainly dependent upon their materiality. The point is, as Halbwachs wrote very beautifully, cited in (Hebbert, 2005, 584), that "the place [...] is not like a blackboard"; where what has been written on it before does not affect what comes next, as it could be simply erased. But rather, in historical public spaces of city, the imprint of happenings leaves a long-lasting influence on both people and the place. In other words, this is the presence of people's everyday sociocultural practices and their use of the place which makes it something meaningful to them. I am not talking about major group events, though of course they are highly relevant. By activities, I mean not only traditions either. I particularly intend on paying special attention to daily occurrences which, in a very real sense, portray the community's dynamic lifestyle and its transformation within time. I believe that it is time to signal a need for giving the subject of place conservation through activities serious consideration. The more social, interactive, and spontaneous activities occur in a place, the better it makes people feel about it. The other way around is also noteworthy; the better a place offer people quality environment, more often those social activities¹¹² happen. This is crucial for city not only to come alive but also to maintain the continuity of its urban identity. To conserve a place identity by means of conserving its authentic¹¹³ activities is neither a straightforward task nor does it solely mean to have a good eye for traditions; but equally importantly, it demands a bright concern for culture-led place-making ideas to be reborn over and over again. In short, it is worth considering the multifaceted capacity of historical public spaces as a venue for understanding heritage. Because of the presence of people and social activities, they have a higher potential to become meaningful to people. We need to encourage local innovative conceptions of public space for a breath of fresh air instead of just storing them in the safe box of fixed shapes and uses. Araoz (2011, 58) asserts that "an important cultural value of the historic city rests precisely upon its ability to be in a constant evolution, where forms, space and uses are always adapting to replace obsolescence with functionality. This gives rise to the paradox - or perhaps the oxymoron - of the concept of preserving the ability to change." So, the very message here is, first, to point up the necessity of re-navigating our way of built heritage conservation through historical public spaces and, second, to underline the significance of activities within them as what which really require to be concerned about and regenerated.

Waterton and Watson (2013, 555), framing heritage theories, recommend that "theories for heritage, should thus be framed in terms of practice and performance." I propose that we should meet the prerequisites of everyday heritage to let it happen. Local communities should be listened to by heritage practitioners and policy makers. We should find better ways of listening to what people have to say, and accommodate those views in heritage practice and policy formulation. This does not mean an end to the old ways, rather the introduction of some new ones (Schofield, 2014). In a parallel manner, "we should develop heritage studies by engaging with heritage practice (Witcomb and Buckley, 2013, 570)." It means that heritage conceptualization and theorization need to be much more context-sensitive. Avoiding generalization also applies to the scale of heritage conservation cases. While we are

¹¹¹ "In one of reviews concerning this issue, based on ideas of Edward Said and Paul Ricoeur, terminology of identity reveals a duality in its meaning, which can be expressed with 'same' and 'self'. While self develops through the time, same resists against it (Memar, 2008)."

¹¹² "Social activities include children's play, greetings and conversations, communal activities of various kinds, and simply seeing and hearing other people (Gehl, 2011)."

¹¹³ Here and all over this piece of writing, the term 'authentic' does not necessarily refer to the past. Rather, for me, it goes along with those interpretations of heritage, as previously stated, being in a state of flux.

dealing with a lived-in heritage neighborhood, it would not suffice to apply the same strategies like buffer zoning which would work well for some national monuments. Rather, it should be more a matter of relying on local residents to be given the chance to speak up their opinions and demands. It may also help to understand that at each level of heritage (individual, family, community, region, state, country, and world), it is that level's right and responsibility to identify and care for its own heritage. So, it is the common responsibility of all stakeholders, including the government and the public, to participate in sustainable development and support heritage conservation. That way, a win-win situation between protection and use of urban cultural heritage would be conceivable. It is nevertheless on national level policy making bodies to actualize such need or pressure and bring about new systems of management for putting things forward as local heritage.

4.2. Place Immaterialities and People

“Whatever space and time mean, place and occasion mean more. For space in the image of man is place, and time in the image of man is occasion (Aldo van Eyck 1959).”

Lowenthal (2015, 604) talks about ‘collective responsibility for the past’, bringing up a stand on the significance of laypeople's part in heritage studies as well as heritage practice. This recalls that “today the expertise and the value of the knowledge held by those other than professional experts are clearly recognized. An obvious example of such a group is the local residents of an area. Their knowledge may be of different character to that of the professional experts, but they are nonetheless to be considered as experts in their own right (Burström, 2014, 101).” This is a simple fact nowadays that the local communities are often expert in the places they live in, as they are those who truly care how their particular places and things are going to sustain in the future. People know – in their own terms, obviously – the impact of change and development on the places they hold dear or even not. But more importantly, it has to be realized that “for most people in the world, the ‘heritage’ aspect of old things is quite incidental to the everyday relationship they have with them (Byrne, 2013, 598).” That is yet another reason why people's views on heritage – although this is often not the word they use – are increasingly a part of heritage discourse; not only since local communities are often expert in the places they care about the most, but also because what most people value is the everyday, the ordinary, the commonplace which are out of professional expertise (Schofield, 2014). Planners and policy makers, however, still continue to privilege experts' scientific and technical knowledge over local knowledge, the understanding that comes from an intimate everyday familiarity with a specific place (Clark, 2012, 121).

Zukin (2010, 244-246), making a link with people's part in the consumption versus repression era that cities have put in place since the 1980s, talks of authenticity in the sense that it must be used to reshape the rights of ownership. She observes¹¹⁴ how the authentic character of a neighborhood is often represented by the group that takes over the power of preserving the look and the experience of its streets and buildings in the way they choose what to do with them. This almost self-claimed right, though, with the help of the state and elected officials and the persuasion of the media and consumer culture, without direct confrontation, is nearly always used to limit the others' ability to put down roots and remain in place. We must, Zukin believes, reach a new understanding of the authentic city in terms of people, to rather preserve the community that lives or works there and has a human right cultivated by longtime residence, use, and habit. Zukin reminds that it takes political will within the capacity of state power to enforce laws for creating new forms of public-private stewardship which allows protecting the city's authenticity from the bottom up. “This would strike a balance between a city's origins and its new beginnings; this would restore a city's soul (Zukin, 2010, 246).” While Zukin

¹¹⁴ largely based on the US system of thoughts and actions

rightfully leans toward a democratic technology of power that nourishes our desire for the kind of city we want – small-scale streets and shops, ethnic and working-class residents, and low rents that allow residents to put down roots in the heart of the city – I think of the point she makes as more of a fine-tuning the practicalities which people’s urban experience is typically framed in. For the sake of my own argument, I would like to keep my concern focused on the creation of urban experience itself. This differs from building on discursive processes in the construction of sense of place, with the purpose of bringing attention to “the more subjective and nuanced, unauthorized, ‘unofficial’ or ‘insider’ ways of making multifarious sense of place (Hawke, 2012, 240).” Not to underestimate the capacity of authorized or ‘official’ notions of the good place, but to acknowledge and underline the significance of both.

From Martin Heidegger’s interest in spiritual unity between humanity and things, within the philosophical approach of phenomenology, to interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary fields concerned with the study of human activity and social interactions, there are tons of reads on how people affect or are influenced by place, be it the earth’s natural landscape or manmade environments like urban spaces. Convery et al. (2012) summarize some of the most important research finds on ‘sense of place’ within human geography¹¹⁵, environmental and social psychology¹¹⁶, and social anthropology¹¹⁷. They report that there are two broad differences in the use of the term ‘sense of place’ in the academic literature. In the first, it¹¹⁸ is used to explore a range of factors which together define the character, or local distinctiveness, of a specific place. “Such a view often conflates the sense and the ontology of place into one seamless whole, a reduction to essence that ignores social constructions of place identity (Dovey, 2009, 4-5).” In the second, the term has been used to emphasize the ways in which people experience, use and understand place, leading to a range of conceptual subsets such as place identity, place attachment, place dependency¹¹⁹ and insiderness/insidedness (Convery et al., 2012, 2). This perspective is premised on the assumption that we do not experience particular places in the same ways, and I identify my research on heritage places to be slightly drawn to this side of spectrum. In pursuing the close ties between cultural heritage and social identity, I turn attention to ‘the role of streets and urban spaces as a locus of collective memory’ (Hebbert, 2005). In fact, it could be said that it is in a city’s public places that people discover better who they really are as a community, and how they reshape their image of self and their shared habitus through generations. “Consequently, it is now largely agreed that most heritage has little intrinsic worth. Rather, values are placed upon artefacts or activities by people who, when they view heritage, do so through a whole series of lenses, the most obvious of which are: nationality; religion; ethnicity; class; wealth; gender; personal history; and that strange lens known as ‘insiderness’ (Graham and Howard, 2008, 2).”

“Place is a dynamic ensemble of people and environment that is at once material and experiential, spatial and social (Dovey, 2009, 7).” Places are formed and experienced as the intertwined knot of spatiality and sociality, and the tangle of this relation is unbreakable. While space is a product of the social, the social is spatially constructed. To put it another way, sense of place is primarily interpreted in regard with both the material space and the social context. Sense of place is not a collective

¹¹⁵ Agnew (1987) specifically reserves ‘sense of place’ to refer to the subjective and emotional attachments people have to place. Wilson (2003) has also examined the importance of exploring non-physical dimensions of place, embedded within culturally specific belief and value systems, which emphasise the social and spiritual aspects of place.

¹¹⁶ Jorgensen and Stedman (2006) use attitudinal approaches and predictive modelling to measure attachment to, dependence on, and identification with place. Describing sense of place as a multidimensional construct representing beliefs, emotions, and behavioural commitments, they argue that attitudinal approaches can better reveal complex relationships between the experience of a place and attributes of that place than approaches that do not differentiate cognitive, affective, and conative domains.

¹¹⁷ As Escobar (2001) observes, landscape is endowed with agency and personhood. Indeed, what cultural landscapes mean or how they are organised are part of complex processes through which individuals and groups define themselves. Such notions are bound up in ‘people’s sources of meaning and experience’ (Castells 1997, 6).

¹¹⁸ often referred to by *genius loci* or spirit of place, related to the Heideggerian view of place as a primordial ground of being

¹¹⁹ sometimes referred to in the social and environmental psychology literature as functional attachment

personality, though. It is more of an ever-evolving assemblage of multiple elements in terms of meanings or characteristics (Hebbert, 2016).

Kim Dovey (2009, 3) says that “place has an intensity that connects sociality to spatiality in everyday life.” On the case of North Pennines¹²⁰, designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in 1988, Hawke (2012, 236) writes, “when describing their sense of place, respondents made reference to a broad array of heritage phenomena. Interestingly, however, accounts of sense of place referred to less tangible notions of cultural heritage. When prompted to describe their sense of place, respondents repeatedly made links to the personality and characteristics of local people.” This shows a way of viewing heritage which falls without the established discourse. It exemplifies that meanings derived from seemingly tangible heritage are not intrinsic or universal, and as such they are beyond tangibility. They are not nonnegotiable and objective, but instead socially constructed and subjective. Hawke adds that respondents described a sense of local distinctiveness related to what Ashworth and Graham (2005) have described as the past’s ability to convey ‘timeless values’. Later in this chapter, I speak about timeless human values in the case of Tehran as likewise described by my interviewees. During my informal conversations with ordinary people, I gathered that they many times brought up social values such as kind-spiritedness, generosity, humility, and alike traits of the locals when talking about distinctiveness of their neighborhoods.

4.3. The Case of Historical Centre of Tehran

In total agreement with Smith (2006, 1), I see heritage as “a process of engagement, an act of communication and an act of making meaning in and for the present.” This statement brings time and of course the role of ordinary people onto the table of my research, both of which automatically lead me to conducting a field research in a specific case study that is the historical center of Tehran. What I am mainly interested in learning about is the influence of historical public spaces on shaping inhabitants’ involvement with or citizens’ impressions of an urban area which happens to be acclaimed officially as the city’s heritage. Part of this is reflected in people’s narratives of their interactions with the historical neighborhoods in daily life which show how they relate to the place at an emotional subconscious level. Through conversing with them about their versions of neighborhoods’ stories, people reveal what really matters to them the most, whether positive or negative, when it comes to the place they call home today. In most cases, they share that their concern is either different from or beyond the remaining presence of some historical buildings from the cherished but bygone era of the area they are interacting with on a daily present tense basis. Although I describe Tehran’s case in Iran, the argument does not have to be seen as merely limited to this specific example. Rather, it could just as well be valid for or at least relatable to many other cities around the world that have lived-in historical cores mostly but not only under vulnerable residential use.

4.3.1. Context Portrayal

Remnants of the city’s historical core still exist, but Tehran’s centre is today an urban area of diverse status quos. The Grand Bazaar, the lively market place, with its brisk trade life going on daily¹²¹; silent and almost frightening nights of sleeping alleys; the special atmosphere of public events, e.g., on the Day of Ashura¹²²; Udlajan neighborhood and its deeply distressed social structure largely accommodating immigrants, single man workers of Bazaar, and bazaaris’ sigheh (temporary married)

¹²⁰ <http://www.northpennines.org.uk>

¹²¹ 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. in weekdays (i.e., Saturday through Wednesday), to noon on Thursday, and closed on Friday and public holidays

¹²² mourning ceremony marking the tenth day of the month of Muharram in the Islamic calendar. Shia Muslims commemorate the Battle of Karbala by holding street rituals in remembrance of Imam Hussein, grandson of the holy prophet Muhammad, and 72 of his family and followers all killed by forces of Yazid.

wives; the distinguished family and neighbors' culture of 30th Tir street¹²³ showcasing a peaceful coexistence of middle class people from different religions; a number of the indigenous people still residing in the old Tehran and calling it home; many brown fields scattered around Sirus neighborhood¹²⁴ housing the homeless and addicts; aged beautiful decaying mansions either abandoned or divided into rooms used as workshops and storages supporting Bazaar; plenty of historical buildings and places standing here and there in good or fairly good shape, hundreds already listed as national heritage; many newly built four floor low quality apartment buildings; only to name a few.



Figure 9: pictures displaying the inequality of urban life context in different parts of central Tehran
Grand Bazaar (left), Golestan Palace (bottom middle), and the other two from deteriorated areas
[Source of Photos: images.google.com]

Tehran's historical center, as known today, suffers from a decaying urban fabric inclusive of aged neighborhoods with many demolished plots, desolated lands, and low-quality reconstructions. The downfall of its glorious times has been largely escalated by the dominance of the Grand Bazaar and its wholesales industry which keeps intruding into the adjacent vulnerable housing quarters. This not only cuts down on the urban liveliness of public spaces restricting it to day time, but also impairs the old town's capacity of production, in terms of being the engine of economic development for the city. Incompatibility of functions and deficiency in local scale public services is another issue when it comes to the current land use condition within most parts of this urban area.

¹²³ formerly known as Ghavam el-Saltaneh; named after Ahmad Ghavam el-Saltaneh (1873-1955), an Iranian politician who served as Iran's prime minister for five terms in the course of 1921 to 1952. After the victory of Islamic revolution in 1979, the name of street changed; referring to the Monday, 30th Tir 1331 (based on Iranian calendar when equals July 21, 1952), the fifth day of an uprising by Tehran and other major cities' citizens against the last Shah of Iran, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, and his newly appointed prime minister, Ghavam. Massive protests took place in support of Mohammad Mossadegh (1882-1967), an Iranian politician holding office as Iran's prime minister at the time since 1951, who formally submitted his resignation when the Shah refused his request that he be trusted with the control of the armed forces. Witnessing the unrest, the Shah dismissed Ghavam and reappointed Mossadegh granting him the Ministry of Defense as he had previously demanded. In 1953, Mossadegh's democratically elected government was overthrown in a coup aided by the United States' Central Intelligence Agency and the United Kingdom's Secret Intelligence Service.

[Sources: <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Ahmad-Ghavam-el-Saltaneh> & <http://www.mohammadmossadegh.com/biography/30-tir/> & <https://www.wikipedia.org>]

¹²⁴ formerly known as Chalmeydan

Despite the fact that some improvement and renovation projects have been implemented mostly along the main streets and pathways, the area's urban fabric is still considered to be highly deteriorated. That is to say that the deeper parts of those historical neighborhoods suffer from several sociocultural and physio environmental problems which have for long been degrading the area's stand in the eyes of citizens.

4.3.2. Fieldwork Choices, Methods, and Ethics

Based on the conceptual foundations of my research, explained previously, my fieldwork aimed for addressing the main question of: what are the components, with emphasis on intangible qualities, that structure and evoke the meanings of this place, to experts, to people/community, and perhaps to both? which ones are specific (i.e., more conditional, less emotional)? which ones are general (i.e., less conditional, more emotional)? and what difference does it (i.e., leaning towards specificities or generalities) make in the ways the place is described?

fieldwork methods

I scheduled my field research for ten weeks. My on-site work included two phases. During my research stay in Tehran, in addition to expert interviews, I visited the case study areas on a daily basis and also interacted with people of different socio-economic standing. The table below shows further details on the different phases of my fieldwork, methodology, and the data I collected.

Phase	Method	Tools/Materials	Target Category	Time/Number	Outcome Data
on-site work I	observation, keeping a diary, photographic documentation	field notes, photos/videos	place and everyday practices in public space	5 days	selection of case study areas
on-site work II	participant observation, keeping a diary, mapping, photographic documentation	field notes, maps, photos/videos	4 case study areas of historical routes (each 500m long avg., located in heart of 3 old neighborhoods)	20 days (10 days per 2 cases) (mostly 2 cases per day)	spatial analysis of historical neighborhood-scale public spaces and daily users' activities
	(short/long and in-depth) informal conversations with individuals and groups	jottings, audio recorder	residents, shopkeepers, and ordinary people	more than 30 laypeople	community's viewpoints
	photo elicitation	photos (taken of things mentioned in people's stories)	residents, shopkeepers, and ordinary people	some of the same laypeople	additional source to complement observation
	semi-structured interviews with experts	audio recorder	professionals and city authorities	11 interviewees + 1 group (of 3)	experts' viewpoints
+	analysis of secondary data resources, to understand the actual relationships of powers	official planning documents, archive, statistical reports	evolution of policies and plans, looking at management system and national regulations	-	critical review (specifically from heritage perspective) on management system and political economy

Figure 10: fieldwork phases and methodology

I would say that I worked with a place-based, community-driven methodology, even though I explored places that have been ‘lost’ more or less, one might say. As it was important for my research that I especially go through places inhabited by people on a daily basis instead of those places where primarily attract tourists or once-in-a-while users, after the first phase of my city inspections, I ended up choosing 4 case study areas of historical routes each 500m long on the average, which are located in heart of 3 old neighborhoods (see the map below). Other reasons why these routes are chosen include: being on the main axes of movement in inner neighborhood areas, providing access with close proximity to major historical buildings and open public spaces, and demonstrating some different examples of urban intervention practices. In order to acquire tacit and implicit knowledge on people’s daily socio-spatial life, I spent in total 20 working days in chosen case areas, 10 days per 2 cases, mostly 2 cases per day. I collected field notes, maps, photos/videos. By the end of the first week in the case study routes, I could identify people who were the everyday users of the place, and then approached them for a talk. I spoke to more than 30 people, either residents of different socio-economic standing or daily users of public spaces within my case study areas. In order to lead the individuals in direction of expressing their deeper thoughts and feelings, I never started my informal conversations by asking them any direct question around heritage topic, but rather I always asked some general questions about their neighborhood (such as, could you please tell me a bit about this neighborhood?), to let them freely share their main ideas or perceptions of the neighborhood. Some respondents were quite brief and some talked for more than an hour.



Figure 11: four case study areas of historical routes

Besides, I interviewed 14 experts either working in heritage-related national/local administrative organizations or professionals working with relevant NGOs or consulting engineers companies involved in urban projects of my case study areas. All interviews were led by my written interview

guide (the structure and questions of semi-structured interviews with experts) and averagely took 1.5 hours.



Figure 12: fieldwork methodology overview showing scopes of findings

data processing step, after completion of fieldwork

After my field trip, I processed the collected data in order to incorporate empirical results. I worked on my jottings and audio records. I transcribed all semi-structured interviews I conducted with experts, as well as all of those recorded (short and in-depth) informal conversations I had with individuals and groups of laypeople. The outcome of this completed task is a document (in Persian language) with 106 pages which serves me while writing up my dissertation as evidences resulted from my field research. To be clear, I build my own synthesis of topics raised in the interviews and conversations to enrich the content of my research arguments and enhance the accuracy of my research findings. I translate (from Persian to English) only excerpts of my transcribed document where I make direct or indirect quotations in my dissertation. Moreover, after completion of my fieldwork, I decided to carry out a complementary phase. As a result of my expert interviews, I concluded that I need to go through Iran's evolution of heritage conservation policies and urban development plans, by means of a critical review on management system and national regulations. The purpose was, as delivered in chapters 2 and 3, to understand the actual relationships of powers that shape the political economy platform where important decisions about cultural heritage in Iran are made.

4.3.3. Socio-spatial Description of Case Study Areas

The followings are my descriptions of the case study areas, impressions of the most notable characteristics of these places, and everyday qualities of each. This is not a reference to historical facts and figures on these areas to recreate a time-lapse sequence of what they once were, but rather it illustrates what they are as of now. What is narrated assembles, for the most part, those findings of fieldwork which emerged from my city inspections as well as on-site informal conversations with individuals and groups of people. However, the ultimate goal of these descriptions is not to simply mark the case study areas with flagsticks of informative narratives. It is not that much about narratives themselves, it is about resonance. It is about resonances that a piece of narrative makes happen. There is a feeling or emotional component to what people describe, whether it is something precious to them or not, and the concept of resonance or the experience of resonance captures some of that. It is about linking, about narratives in relation, not just some individuals having some certain emotions. It is describing in a context, that is a social, relational, and political context.

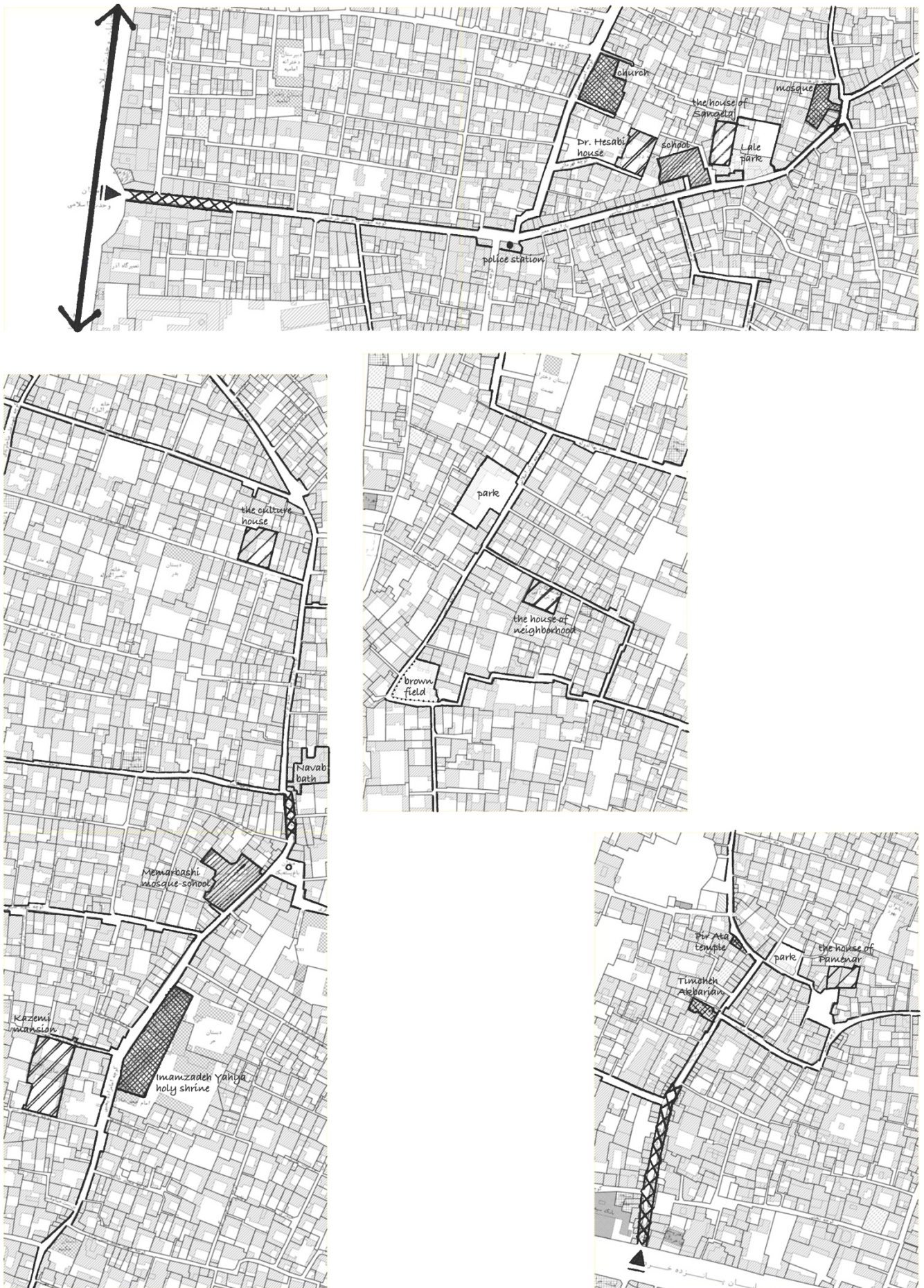


Figure 13: map showing historical route of case study area no. 1 (top), no. 2 (left), no. 3 (middle), no. 4 (right)

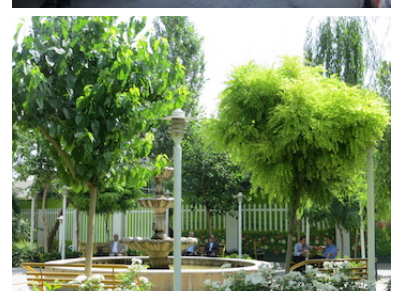
case study area no. 1: Sangelaj neighborhood, Tarkhani – Moayer market passage

This route from its west entrance starts with a covered local-scale market passage of mostly grocery stores, but also a variety of some other small businesses like clothing and jewelry shops. The lively and colorful atmosphere of daily merchandise dominates the activities happening along this market passage. In the evenings, when their work around the Grand Bazaar is over, vendors selling fresh vegetables and fruits come to this place and add to the liveliness of its everyday scene. As the route finds its way more into the neighborhood, however, a slow change from the wide range of shops to shoe-making workshops can easily be noticed. These workshops use the ground level shop for exhibiting their products, and in many cases their storage and production units occupy the upper floors of buildings which seem to be once residential. This clearly shows how far and in what sort of wholesale the Grand Bazaar has penetrated into Sangelaj neighborhood. Lale park, together with its small playground and some workout equipment, has been built some years ago by the municipality after demolition of a few housing plots in order to construct a center for the neighborhood, called the house of neighborhood, which is to offer socio-cultural services to families, mostly targeted at children and women, in order to support and educate them. The greenery and soothing sound of the running water in the park's fountain seem to be welcoming enough, although one cannot simply ignore the annoying noise coming from motorcycles and cars passing one after the other through the rather narrow alley and all those loud workshops nearby too.

“nowadays, as there are too many cars and motorcycles coming and going every second, the market passage is no longer appealing... in old times, there existed such silence and peace, so that everybody liked the place... now, no one does... this market passage is the oldest in Tehran, though”

(male, young, herbal medicine shopkeeper)

It appears that the way people perceive places is less about the physical body of buildings and things in the space, but rather it is more about the way they feel in the place. This man refers to the silence and peace of old times in the market passage as something valuable. To put it another way, it seems that for people the age and historical value of place is not per se as important. They might find new places equally or even more appealing and valuable, as long as they could provide a competent setting for emotional qualities that they long for. Assuming that the neighborhood as a whole should be considered as cultural heritage is to accept that the layout and design of buildings and open spaces in it are important, but only because they, in the inclusionary totality of all the small things about them, could trigger such kind of feelings in the users that they like experiencing. For example, the long cool shadows of the old sycamore trees lined up sporadically along this route bring about a sense of ease in the daytime, and the intoxicating fragrance of night-blooming jasmine add a delicious mystery to evening and nighttime. Pupils wearing school uniforms, housewives with their young kids, and



elderly seem to appreciate spending some while in and around little green spots of their neighborhood after all. However, this not always means that they are overall happy with the neighborhood they are living in. But it does likely show that people get to choose on what they place their focus in every given moment, and that intentional act of focus determines how they feel about the object of their attention in their now. But, it cannot feel so good for long, if one's expectations are not being met.

"I moved in one year ago, don't know the neighborhood well... housing rents are cheap, that's why we chose to live here, just out of hopelessness, not that I'm happy to... cultural level [of residents] is somehow low, mostly are workers, mostly are emigrants from Afghanistan, there are many addicts, robbery happens often, alleys are dirty, municipality's urban service is the worst... here has nothing [good]... seems like an island [without basic facilities]"
(female, young, housewife)

She refers more to the current sociocultural, economic, and institutional conditions of the neighborhood. Or else if one's expectations are being met, their story beats the drum of good feeling thoughts.

"I like this neighborhood... my children wanted me to move out to Shahrak Gharb [a planned modern town in northwestern Tehran], but I didn't agree... here is good... one has access to everything just so easily... there're several bakeries, grocery stores, and fruit & vegetable shops only along this route... in Shahrak Gharb, you have to walk 2 km [too long] for buying a Sangak [a type of Iranian flatbread]"
(male, in his 60s, veteran)

It is said that an individual will form stronger attachments to place¹²⁵ when that place enables them to achieve their personal preferences. This man speaks about his appreciation of the neighborhood and some aspects of it which he enjoys, at more of a functional day to day level. So, it all comes down to desires and perceptions. Many, if not all, people develop a sense of strong bond or deep connection to places they live and grow old in¹²⁶, anyways.

"I've always been a tradesman in this neighborhood, anyway... got used to it... am going to stay here till I pass away... look, the original Tehran is here... when all areas around were just deserts [uninhabited], this was Tehran"
(male, 74, barber)

The load of experiences and memories a person like this old man has in mind from the place makes it something meaningful to him, even though many other people may not understand what is of value in those bricks and soil. Clearly, the values do not rest much, if any, on the surface of



¹²⁵ Korpela (1989) goes so far as to link place identity with place dependency via developing the idea of self-efficacy. As Coleman (2015, 95) points out, Lefebvre explains it with reference to the order of the body. Yet, Lefebvrian space serves not the anatomical or functional body, but the body as polyrhythmic and eurhythmic, the passive body (the senses) and the active body (labour) which converge in space.

¹²⁶ Robert Hay (1998, 6) uses a mix of social surveys and ethnography to investigate the importance of time and duration of stay in relation to sense of place, and suggests that "if a person resides in a place for many years, particularly if that person is raised there, then he or she often develops a 'sense of place', feeling at home and secure there, with feelings of belonging for the place being one anchor for his or her identity." He also notes that age stage, insider status, local ancestry, and the development of an adult pair bond are important factors in the development of a more rooted sense of place.

things, because they lay on a soul depth level that people make connection with. It is very different when one just has heard about the originality of a place and when they live it themselves. The contrasting narratives about the same neighborhood, not to mention their importance, are equally relevant.

“they [Tehran’s municipality] say they want to stone-pave this route... they say so, but no one knows when... it’s being said for 50 years now that the shops have to set back, as they want to change the road to a street... still, the same... no change”

(male, middle-aged, shoemaker)

He talks about the neighborhood as something dynamic, and refers to the political and institutional will for change. There is a police station right in the middle way of the route, where it becomes a bit wider shaping almost a neighborhood node. The police conex box, situated at one of the corners of this rectangle-like space, according to some locals has helped with the safety issues, although the problem still lingers¹²⁷. A common architectural feature of the narrow dead-end alleys which lead to older houses is being defined with a solo arch or barrel vaults¹²⁸ right over where they open into the main route. In some, often in longer alleys, there is also a roofing structure¹²⁹ built between the opposite walls with the walking path beneath it, functioning as support for buildings on both sides which at the same time maximizes daytime shade and accelerates breezes. Some examples of such structure, with a lower height from the ground and a room or parts of the house on top, can be found in Sangelaj neighborhood. As the locals believe, one bending down while walking through such pathway shows respect. They call it greeting. There are many aged buildings within the neighborhood which are associated with national figures, as for example, the building in which Prof. Dr. Hesabi¹³⁰ was born. Several posters on the walls of its beautiful 1200 m² garden, now a neighborhood park, explain that only a small part of this valuable building has been used as a cultural center, but main parts of the house are left untouched and unexploited.



case study area no. 2: Imamzadeh Yahya neighborhood, Imamzadeh Yahya passageway – Hammam Navab market passage

This neighborhood is best known for its religious charm tied with Imamzadeh Yahya holy shrine and its 900-year-old sycamore tree, said to be the oldest living being in Tehran. Among other highlights, Memarbashi mosque-school, Kazemi mansion, Navab historical public bath, and many donated public drinking fountains, called Saqqakhaneh, are probably by far the most talked about ones. The culture house and



¹²⁷ Livingston et al. (2008) identify two key factors that can lead to erosion of place attachment, namely crime and a high population turnover. They argue that these have the effect of eroding trust. Clark (2012, 122) argues that “successful places are more likely to evoke pride, feelings of ownership and identity, positive aspirations and commitment and behaviour that favours localised business and protects the physical structure of the place from casual or intentional damage.”

¹²⁸ in Persian called Chartaq, if consisted of four barrel vaults and a dome

¹²⁹ in Persian called Sabat

¹³⁰ known as the father of contemporary Iranian physics who also served as senator from Tehran from 1950 to 1961 and as the Minister of Education for Iran from 1951 to 1952

library of neighborhood is hosted by a historical building after its recent restoration. This neighborhood center organizes different kinds of extra curriculum classes, including arts and crafts, sciences, foreign languages, etc., for children and teenagers. The small public square in the middle way of the route is definitely one of the interesting spots in this neighborhood. It is surrounded by some supermarkets, vegetable and fruit shops, a couple of bakeries, and a men's barbershop. It sounds odd that all these small businesses selling the same goods could survive so close to each other, but it seems that they have somehow managed to coexist with no conflict, as they all equally are busy with their local customers. The quadrangle-shape square shares one of its edges with the main route, which makes its western side so much troubled with passing and stopping cars and motorcycles, although prohibitory traffic signs suggest otherwise. Truck vendors selling vegetables is a thing here, and seem to be annoying for non-pedestrians as much as they happen to be well received by their customers waiting patiently in the queue to buy potatoes, onions, or tomatoes. If someone decides to sit for a while in the square, around the fountain under a mulberry tree and a weeping willow tree would be the nice but only option available. You might even hear the Adhan¹³¹, if it is the time. People seem way less closed off to others in Imamzadeh Yahya neighborhood than they do in some other neighborhoods within the area. Little advertising poster hung on a supermarket display window lets Afghan neighbors know that they can buy Vatan (meaning homeland in Persian) card to make cheap and high-quality phone calls to Afghanistan. Relations are built on mutual trust and respect which largely rely on social norms and people's religious beliefs. The importance of family life is celebrated. Local real estate agents have a note on their announcement boards stating that no place for rent is available for single men. Religious teachers or mentors are respected, and play an important role in ensuring the wellbeing of the community members.

"the best thing [of this neighborhood] is the Haj Ali Akbaris [the family of Haj Ali Akbari]... they are not only generous and charitable, but also spiritually educated... right now, they're the greatest of our assets"

(male, 82, tailor)

The importance of social capital in this place is so high that he believes the greatest of their neighborhood's asset is the social ties¹³².



¹³¹ the Islamic call to worship, recited at prescribed times of the day by a muezzin from the mosque, traditionally from the minaret

¹³² Lewicka (2005) argues that place attachment, civil participation, and social cohesion are intimately linked and mutually reinforcing. Thrift (2008, 218) gives credit to the actions of friendship networks. He believes that if such networks actively exist in one area, they perform as both glue and as a means of social maintenance and repair. If otherwise, the area proves correspondingly brittle. "Cities are based in large part on activities of repair and maintenance, the systematic re-placement of place, and this ability is still there in times of trouble to be adapted to the new circumstances. These activities provided a kind of glue, which hastened cities' recovery times, most especially because all kinds of processes are being intervened in, some of which are pretty easy to deal with quickly (e.g. broken power lines), others of which take far longer to mend (e.g. broken hearts). Cities, in other words, took hard knocks but with the aid of all these activities they could get up, dust themselves off, and start all over again (Thrift, 2008, 201)." He mainly talks based on Western cities impacted by major catastrophes, for example British cities in the Second World War or large Vietnamese cities in the 1960s and 1970s. Besides that, when he talks about modern cities, he explains 'activity' through such facilities related to maintenance and repair jobs like electrician and similar everyday technological skills. It seems to me what concerns him is actually more of the resilient city ideas only with positioning himself in a more philosophical stand.

case study area no. 3: Naser Khosro neighborhood

The senior locals recall the time when their neighborhood used to be where the royal, country's ministers, socio-political leaders, and famous authors live in. Old names of many alleys soundlessly tell the same story, although not much has remained from that glory to be seen today. Except for some random parts which are still in a rather good condition, the inner parts of this neighborhood appear to be distressed and quite depressing. Although a few number of historical buildings seem to be under restoration¹³³, the majority of houses suffer from deterioration. There are many brown fields here and there along the passageways. People's presence in neighborhood's public areas is limited to passersby, only if they have to go out or get back home. Children are to be seen rarely, none in the playground, not even in the culture house which is a recently restored beautiful historical building. Homeless addicts passed out around the corners are way more often seen than anyone else. Towards Amir Kabir street, adhesives and resins, nuts and bolts, and some other chemical and industrial supplies are what wholesalers trade in. Towards Pamenar street, consumables and plastics, laser-cut metal sheets, and panels of steel fences are ruling. Many buildings are occupied as storage units, with trucks loading and unloading things all day long from early morning till late evening. Inner neighborhood businesses along the route are as few as a couple of small supermarkets, a fast-food shop, and a junk shop. There are, however, some more commercial units, but they are either closed or non-active.



case study area no. 4: Pamenar neighborhood, Udlajan – Hakim passageway

Hakim passageway has become and seemingly continues to be the hub of bag-making workshops in service of the Grand Bazaar. Udlajan market passage, however, has recently been renovated as result of a partnership practice. It has been covered with traditional-looking arched roof built with bricks hiding its new after the iron age structure. Shop owners had their own share in the partnership process in terms of financing, but were mostly unsatisfied with the lengthy project, design and construction details¹³⁴, and in general the outcome. A sense of mistrust has also developed among people toward experts and authorities, and in general toward those who claim to be helping them with improving their living



¹³³ Heard when passing by slowly while eavesdropping on a dialogue between two random, seemingly addict, men looking at two recently renovated buildings: “this one looks so nice”... “yes, Seyed Ali [the first man’s name], this one looks nice, too”... “they should have not done it this way, though... they should have not painted the brick walls”... “this building is at least 80 years old... it’ll be upsetting, if they destroy it... it’s a pity, if this building disappears”

¹³⁴ A lady whose husband owns one of the shops says: “they have built new columns inside people’s shops... they [ICHTO] want to fix things for better, but they actually make them even worse... you know, it’s just their way of working... my husband didn’t let them to make too much changes... the brick mason wanted to use new bricks, because they’re just easier for him to work with... but my husband collected old usable bricks from demolished houses around to be reused in our shop’s restoration... they didn’t do much for us, only replacing some bricks and a bit of mortar stains cleaning up”

conditions in these neighborhoods¹³⁵. Timcheh Akbarian, today a well-known teahouse in Tehran, occupies what was the first Iranian bank established in the Qajar era. Carpeted booths on two levels look on to a long thin pool with a fountain. The owners of this place tell the story of how some young architecture students visited their building some years ago and encouraged them to revive it as a teahouse. They would even recommend some other places worth visiting, such as a nearby synagogue¹³⁶. They are, however, concerned about the neighborhood not being safe for a person walking alone with no company, especially for females. Pir Ata temple with its small volume and modest entrance might not even be noticed, if one is not looking for it. The building, originated some 600 years ago in the Safavid era, has been restored. The green lighting inside, low ceiling, dome above the tomb, carpets on the floor, and an Alam¹³⁷ leaning on the back wall add to the uniqueness and peacefulness of its interior space.



These were some characteristics of the case neighborhoods grasped by an observer who also listened to what people shared through their talks. They are not just some thought-provoking information but illuminate traces of those ‘meanings’ that I seek as the essence, soul, or life force of cultural heritage. They reinforce the assumption that intangibility of cultural heritage goes hand in hand with the intentionality of meaning-making. One important point that can be relearned from these descriptions is that the mind will go wherever one puts their focus. In this sense, intangible qualities of a place could be seen as though they come in a layered package. Depending on how deep one’s mind reaches for things in there, what they might pull out would feel different. So, it is not an accidental connection. It is very intentional. Another point worth attending to is that people, at times simultaneously, reflect on the social, political, economic, cultural, spatial, and institutional characteristics of specific places they talk about. Although their language, usage of words, and topics of address obviously differs from those of experts, I find it highly useful to work with their concept of value and what they have to say about their neighborhoods. Because, as previously discussed, the ways in which people encounter places, perceive them, and endow them with significance or insignificance are bound up in their relationship with the place. People, their environments, individual and community identities are mutually constructed and constituted (Harvey, 2001).

4.4. The Distinctiveness of Tehran’s Heritage

Discussing the multifaceted capacity of historical urban fabric in central Tehran as an example of lived-in heritage, I argued for the necessity of rethinking the meaning of heritage in the specific setting of present Tehran and perhaps similar cases of Mideast cities as well. Having got this viewpoint, I showed how the role of ordinary people and their everyday practice of living in more historical areas of city are of great relevance and importance to heritage discourse.

I began my PhD research journey wondering what makes Tehran distinct from all the other cities and, for that matter, what makes heritage of each city distinct from those of all the others. If anything, I

¹³⁵ They feel threatened by anyone who carries a map, takes notes, and photographs around their property. A young male shopkeeper says: “a while back, someone from Jamejam [a daily newspaper published in Iran] came here and took some photos... a few day later, the municipality invalidated my business license”

¹³⁶ Udlajan has since former times been known as a Jewish neighborhood in Tehran.

¹³⁷ one of the most important and symbolic objects, consisting of flexible steel blades at the upper part of it, decorated by plumes and fine embroidered silks and brocades, used at Shia mourning rituals of the month of Muharram in the Islamic calendar

knew that I am going to look for what I would phrase as ‘the dear difference’ mostly in the realm of intangibles. Walking this path, I learned that how much of what I reach for is actually aligned with the more recent paradigms within heritage studies, *Eigenlogik of City* and *Critical Heritage Studies*, to name just two of the most important ones for me. Long story short, given the scope of my work, I found some answers to my initial enquiry, or better to say, some glimpses of what they might be. But more so, I realized that trying too hard to find something heritage-wise special about things, no matter what and from which nature, could easily backfire on our comprehension of the totality of their beingness. In other words, it seems like defining things by only a small fraction of what they really are, and then giving them labels based on that, may prove counterproductive and it often does. Things usually stand out against others, if that shall matter at all, just being themselves, the whole of them, not only some of what they actually are. Furthermore, the situation of historical urban areas is even more complex, “where values have also expanded from being assumed to rest entirely in its urban fabric and its building morphologies toward the dynamic nature of the city and its inherent role in providing a vibrant setting for communal life and an incubator for creativity (Araoz, 2011, 58).”

My deduction about distinctive qualities of Tehran’s heritage, which could be derived from many other cities as well, is that they are qualities related to the role of ordinary people in both consuming and constructing the actual or notional vessels for their everyday meaningful life experiences. I believe that the significance of a place is not defined by separate things, but instead it is “a messy mingling of things tangible and intangible (Clifford, 2011, 14)” and even more importantly what happens in there which shapes the people’s sentiments about the place. One of my expert interviewees (I5) pointed out that there are some commonalities between Tehran and all other historical cities, so are some dissimilarities. However, he believes that what makes Tehran different than other cities is by far its people, and its long-established or known culture of cultural plurality. He continues that Tehran has always been open and receptive to other cultures, incomers from other regions of the country and even abroad, religious minorities, and in general various and new ways of living. Citizens of Tehran have since long ago developed and maintained a sense of dual identity that allows them to become well integrated in the multicultural society which the city hosts and, at the same time, do not lose sight of their individual ethno-cultural background with which they equally strongly identify themselves. Such harmonious and effortless co-existence of different cultures in Tehran has always been a telling trait of the city and its people, maybe not an exceptional one though. Tehran’s culture is welcoming, tolerant of others, generous, but does not bear a position of inferiority, enters conversations, but does not melt into the other parties of dialogue, rather desires preeminence, and gracefully accomplishes it by constantly producing newer versions of its own culture and reproducing its own translation of arriving cultures or simply being influential in the newcomers’ self-adaptation to Tehran’s rhetoric.

5. Conclusion and Discussion

“You have no use for the good old days. Whenever you find yourself slipping into a nostalgic frame of mind, mourning the loss of the things that seemed to make life better then than it is now, you tell yourself to stop and think carefully, to look back at Then with the same scrutiny you apply to looking at Now, and before long you come to the conclusion that there is little difference between them, that the Now and the Then are essentially the same.”

from *Winter Journal* by Paul Auster

5.1. Summary

Since the more conventional notions of heritage have constantly been in evolution, there lately happened a shift from the instrumental use of the past, using the past to change the present or to improve the present, to a domesticated understanding of it (Lowenthal, 2011). Accordingly, the well-established value systems have been pushed to adapt to newer perceptions of heritage, and empower the more subtle but profound merits of heritage which have formerly been hidden and de-empowered behind the loudness of exhibitiv forms of heritage. Along those lines, the intention of my inquiry is to promote the concept of “heritage as life-values (Josefsson and Aronsson, 2016, 2091)” with a focus on unofficial meanings of heritage things that, for me, are people’s sentiments regarding them and intangible qualities, either general or specific, embedded in their being. I also illustrate how authorized meanings of urban heritage are continuously reconstructed and institutionalized in accordance with sociopolitical influences, generally and in the case of Iran specifically. I provide an overview of heritage policies and plans for inner city historical areas in Tehran, as an example.

I discuss that connectivity between cultural heritage conservation and urban development planning has to be aimed for by employing multi-level and cross-sectoral approaches. It needs to be reflected in the governance model, institutional cooperation, and financing programs. Reviewing the evolution of Iran’s heritage related policies and plans, within the years studied in this research, i.e., 1979-2015, I suggest a necessity for an integrated system of management which not only seeks an attainable balance between conservation and development in all urban projects but also promotes a constant dialogue between all the different sectors involved. My research demonstrates that in the case of Iran, heritage understanding and activating must be the major aim in the level of Iran’s national regulations, and the approach should be more conceptual, rather than operational. All bodies of management system, either governmental or non-governmental, have to be entrusted with the task of cultural heritage conservation. Iran’s Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts, and Tourism Organization (ICHTO) should be the leader, not the only hand and the solo responsible organization who is addressed or blamed for all heritage issues. This is to say that the political meanings of heritage are to be grounded in the institutional and legal context of urban planning. In regard to historical neighborhoods, the immediate problems such as mobility difficulties, physical insecurity, and environmental issues must be attended in the light of a holistic comprehension of larger socio-economic hardships and their consequences in the urban areas such as safety and gender concerns. Undoing or alleviating extreme and unwanted changes in land-use and social demography requires patience and calls for a harmonious process of quality reconstructions and paced restorations, supported by authorities, foreseen by experts, but ideally initiated by people. Any hurried or imposed action of project-based nature could run the risk of failure, as many of the previous trials already did. Decision-makers should get acquainted and comfortable with a mindset of interactivity that does not allow them to fall easily into the problem-solving mode of their own filed of interest. In other words, new code of ethics may embrace and outline the value of having no routine at all, instead of having ineffective or destructive

ones. Keeping a sustainable balance in the process of protection and use of built heritage cannot be achieved by conventional mono-sectoral methods. Rather, it demands interdisciplinary constructs by combining insights from various points of view as well as the careful and thoughtful use of on-site potentials by the planner or designer through a back and forth process. It requires going through a non-linear process, instead of a one-way road of planning and designing, because concepts have to be reviewed and rethought over and over again well in advance. In my viewpoint, for the first thing, pre-assumed understandings of urban heritage have to be revisited. The way we understand heritage of our cities affects contemporary intervention plans. Studies on the history of city should be integrated with forward looking strategies, practices, and methods, as part of planning itself. Nevertheless, urban planners initially need to deepen their understanding of the city's cultural and socio-spatial background and its transformation within time. Only then, they would be able to develop a dynamic process of place-making appropriate for each specific context they are dealing with, for preserving the past while moving toward the future. Accordingly, the perspective on historical center of Tehran should shift from an urban area holding neighborhood scale functions to the cultural core of city, activated with economic reasoning, offering alternative proper city scale functions for places. Municipality's policy of issuing as many as residential licenses they could, which they are so proud announcing it, cannot be the best solution.

I point out the necessity of re-navigating the way of heritage conservation to historical public spaces as a venue for understanding the in-transition perceptions of heritage. I talk about places used by people on a daily basis, not those where primarily attract tourists and once in a while passersby. As Ashworth (in Onciul et al., 2017, 53) puts it, heritage has to be seen "as the property of those who claim it and use it. I do not wish it to be appropriated by self-justifying gatekeeper 'professionals'." I argue for the significance of place conservation through activities, because the presence of people's everyday sociocultural practices and their use of the place makes it something meaningful to them. This daily connection makes heritage of the community distinct from those of all the others. For them, it becomes (emotionally) unique, not (conditionally) special. Learning about the current circumstances of each specific case always shines a whole other light on things than what the international literature on participatory planning teaches. Methodologies of participatory approach have been globally open to debate since many years, because not every context brings us the same real-time story. Acknowledging the role of historical public spaces as part of the present city in reshaping the collective memory of inhabitants through generations, I suggest that in-depth investigation into individual and shared experiences of everyday urban life in public spaces could contribute to a new paradigm for sustaining city's living vernacular heritage and identity. In the case of Tehran, I find intangible qualities of the historical center to be perceptible in several different parallel levels or sorts of intangibility, rather than a standalone entity with a set of boarded-up meanings. They could be best described as a package of intentional affair of thoughts and emotions, including the more obvious ones and the less obvious ones; in terms of how easy an associated meaning is to be reached, whether it is a practiced or a not-so-practiced one, and where it stands on a (virtual) spectrum of conditional-emotional qualities. Urban memory is usually used as an umbrella term which refers to the associations between places, events, and people's interactions within some specific timeframes. Cultural norms and social traditions could be thought of as what gives a particular flavor to sociocultural events of every and all local communities, each in their own right. They could even speak for the way places are shaped, and the way people might choose how to behave. For example, events of the month of Muharram which are still actively practiced in central Tehran are strongly linked to people's deep-rooted beliefs, be they coming from their family upbringing, religious orientations, or societal impact. In this sense, Muharram's ceremonial mourning events with all of the many important details, e.g., dress code, custom of donating food, symbolic objects used at rituals, etc., could rightfully be recognized as intangible heritage, in terms of 'what' and 'how' it is. This status of recognition which, I would say, is midway between physicality of what and semi-non-physicality of how, has already been achieved

within official heritage authorizations. There, however, very often remains the ‘why’ unspoken of or least spoken of. To my understanding, whatever it might be that fills in the blank of the why part of the story is as important in terms of intangible qualities that that officially-named intangible heritage represents. Iranians cook and distribute charity food, called Nazri, on the Day of Ashura. Why? It comes from the ancient tradition of Nazr, a person’s vow with God to be kept and fulfilled upon being granted their wish. Well, one might argue, we could simply add another layer or many others to our pile of already-named intangible heritages in which for instance the tradition of Nazr, in terms of the intentionality of its concept which is purely non-physical, stands. Yes, of course, as we wish. But, my point here is that there is a big difference between what the mind-built systems of official heritage has the limited capacity for, as to research and document thoughts, and the infinity of human beings’ souls, as to know and feel emotions. This is not to say that the followings, just to name a few, are not qualities that are (partly) non-physically focused in my case study areas: housing morphology in terms of representing vernacular architecture, configuration of public and private spaces as relates to sociocultural attributes, and decorative elements outside and inside the buildings as embodiment of artefactual integrity. I mean, though, to say that there are more to each one of them, since there are parts to them which are embedded in internal layers of worldview, ontology, and culture of whoever relates to them. And because those parts are subtle, and for most normative minds insignificant or in some cases even superstitious, need to be intentionally tuned into in order for them to be recognized and embraced as something worthwhile. They do not actually have to be rated as worthwhile or not worthwhile based on cultural heritage weighting scales, because either way, like the greater part of the iceberg that lies below the surface of the water, the larger part of human experience always exists below the surface of awareness. This is not just a rambling speech to overlook or condemn the physical, but rather a reminder to allow ourselves to enjoy them better, more often, and consciously. Most of the substantial things in life are insignificant, like the air that we breathe, because it is always there that we do not even need to think about it. What I would like to emphasize here is that these realms of heritage things that I talk about or these layers of things’ intangibility have never nearly enough been considered in empirical studies, maybe because it simply is not something that can be captured and understood by mind-based logic, scientific arguments, and systematical methodologies. So, I, by no means, claim that my empirical research on Tehran makes a contribution in that regard in terms of demonstrating some scientifically intellectual evidence. It does, however, trigger the emotional intellect to focus intentionally on the subtle reality of non-physical, our spiritual wisdom, and vastness of our inner worlds. Still, not being able to scientifically prove the existence of something of spiritual essence does not prove that it just simply does not exist or does not matter. Yet, for now, assuming that there might be a limitless reality of higher resonance, that we all are part of, has got to count for something in terms of the ways in which one, urban experts specifically included, might choose to wrap their mind around what cultural heritage could as well mean, and that surely makes an impact on their professional ethics. Moreover, people’s experience of daily life is interwoven with their feelings, yet no one is forced how to feel, they get to choose their feeling state of being in every given moment. All human beings have the ability to focus inward, if they choose to, and use it as their guidance system for understanding what their responses to different conditions and circumstances mean. We all know how it feels like when ‘touched’ by a thing, by a space, for example while walking into or in a building, be it Sheikh Lotfollah Mosque or Notre Dame du Haut. That is to say, what I refer to as intangible qualities of cultural heritage are not specific to Iran or Tehran. It is based on the laws of the universe, so this part of my argument is transferable to all heritages everywhere and anywhere. This research answers the question of ‘how it is possible to protect things of nonphysical character by physical means’ with suggesting the very initial intentional steps; that are first, consciously approving of them and then, deliberately wanting to keep them active in nowadays spatial manifestations through the practice of creating new spaces that could evoke the essence of such intangible qualities.

How far this strategy of protection, if it shall be called so at all, succeeds will be revealed by observing how far newly created places provide the kind of spatial settings for people's experiences¹³⁸ that could enhance their interconnection with their sources of meanings. This brings me to the next point which pertains to embracing change and continuity. In my opinion, as far as places are concerned, heritage conservation, if anything, has way more to do with the now rather than the then, creating the new rather than saving the old. "Archiving is the new delete, it's 2019."

It still seems to many that heritage is about the past, but it really is not. "The past is integral to our being. We learn to live courageously with its totality, [...] for the whole of the past is our legacy. [...] Yet our legacy, divine and diabolical alike, is not set in stone but simmers in the incipient flux of time. Far from inertly ending, the ongoing past absorbs our own creative agency, replenishing that of countless precursors (Lowenthal, 2015, 609-610)." Neither is heritage preservation, if that is what we want to do, only about preserving historical places. It is way more about building new places in a manner that revives the essence of what have been lived up to present. New architects, designers, and others are the ones who could keep the fire burning and glowing, not the heritage advocates. In central Tehran, historical neighborhoods have experienced some unfavorable changes in the residential community that have had a dramatic impact on the demography of the area. Less family households, more newcomers, and a higher percentage of low income population have weakened the socioeconomic profile of the city center. Although that is still pretty much the current situation, newborn incentives for change are gradually showing up. Some younger generations from around the city have turned their attention to the historical center and have established their business startups in a number of old houses within the area. This movement tends to be growing which in the longer run could have a powerful effect on improving the weary situation of the whole urban area. There are also some grassroots organizations that voluntarily work to empower children and women of socially vulnerable groups. They are based in a few houses in which a group of university students with the support of community itself organize various educational and recreational activities for children who live in those less fortunate urban quarters. Graffiti artists, painters, and street artists are other groups who often collaborate. These all, if carry on, sound quite promising to be capable of slowly but surely healing the chronic wounds of a historical urban area which experts could not successfully nurse for years. It most likely works eventually, because what these initiatives care about is first and foremost the people, not the place, and second, they are not necessarily trying to push against the current conditions, they simply embrace what is, keep moving forward, and make slight changes as they go to morph what-is into something that pleases them better. But academically-trained architects' object of attention, usually and professionally, is the built environment and their aim is to bring in some physical changes in order to improve the external. And these are all good and fair enough. However, their work could be even more impactful if they consider their calling to be greater than that. It is very important for practitioners to be aware of and committed to their role in finding some innovative ways for revitalizing a historical urban texture, no matter what limitations there exist or how challenging it is regarding various political and economic circumstances. I used to hear Seyed Mohsen Habibi, my dearest teacher at University of Tehran, passionately saying to us, his students, that I have to have learned my tradition of architecture, if I want to teach you to remember that. When I have not learned it myself, when I have forgotten the knowledge of my history and my land, when I do not know my culture and my natural environment, then obviously, I would design based on the current technical know-hows I happen to pursue maybe even imperfectly. While I have lost the meaningful connection to my source of knowing, the cycle [of passing on the knowing] cannot be complete. That is why you do not remember it when encountering any remnant of the past, wondering what it is and what it means. It, to you, might be nothing more than an old unstable body. Nostalgia does not promise

¹³⁸ At least for a while in architecture evolution, the importance of what Lefebvre calls 'rhythmanalysis' has been somewhat underrated. To such an extent that it seems unimaginable today to even spot a city that has never invented some sort of catastrophic, overly scaled, or lacking vitality spaces where are unable to serve the necessary and inevitable restoration of the total human body.

familiarity, it does not speak the language of souls. Or as they say, “words do not teach, it is only life experience that brings you your knowing.” Nathaniel Coleman (2015, 116) encourages architects to work towards a more balanced mental attitude which enables them to perceive the rhythms of the city¹³⁹, and reminds that it requires, as Lefebvre observes, equally attentive eyes and ears, a head and a memory and a heart. I like to call it the ability of getting acquainted with the relativity and floating along the serenity of meanings of creating. So, as far as architects and other professional urban co-creators are concerned, they must honor the concord between their motive and what they create, because for a place of their creation – whatever or wherever – to have soul there must exist a unity between the two. “If this unity does not exist, or if it is broken, the soul is non-existent and the spirit of the place becomes grotesque. The creator must believe in what he is creating; in the experience of the what that is being created. In so doing, the creator forms a bit of his own image, the soul, the humanness, if you will, in the creation (Mills, 2008).”

5.2. Closing Remarks and Recommendations for Future Research

“If you want to make a living flower, you do not build it physically with tweezers, cell by cell; you grow it from a seed. If you want to design a new flower, you will design the seed and let it grow (Alexander, 1977).”

In an interview with John Tunbridge (in Onciul et al., 2017, 50), he says “[...] we can pass on historical resources to posterity but we absolutely cannot predetermine the heritage meanings, if any, that posterity will derive from them. The more we give succeeding generations reasons [...] to look askance at heritage as we have shaped it, the more likely they may be to regard the concept as discredited and disengage themselves from it both individually and as communities. We are perhaps most likely to influence posterity to sustain the concept of heritage if we disavow rigid attitudes in favour of an open-mindedness to evolving ideas. [...] perhaps we should accept – and better plan for – an ongoing erasure of some of them [i.e., heritages]; recognising that new heritages are being created thereby – and in the process accepting the detachment of heritages from the material survival of resources that commonly inspired them. It is at least arguable that future communities are more likely to maintain engagement with a future heritage if they recognise it as flexibly and realistically still relevant to their evolving circumstances, rather than laden with inherited morphological, social, economic or ideological baggage – in itself unwelcome heritage from preceding generations.” This commentary speaks deeply to me, owing to the fact that I believe meanings is all that matters. And everything is the meaning that one gives it, because fundamentally all things and circumstances are neutral. We have the ability to give them whatever meaning we want. We actually do it all the time. Thus, trying to shape the heritage meanings as we now understand them or want them to be, in order to be passed on to those who come after us, to me, seems like holding a snowball tight in fist with the hope that it will stay there as long as we do not drop it. Whereas, it is impossible. At some point, we need to let it go and let that be okay. The future generations will think their own thoughts, develop thoughtful doubts other than ours and cope with them different than us, and make as well their imprint on cities. This is not to promote passivity or having no boundaries. It is simply to acknowledge that we do not, and more importantly, we do not need to, have the ultimate power of controlling and micromanaging the future of cultural heritage. As long as we commit to making sensible choices in the now, we are serving our calling. Expansion happens, things carry on, we are as well part of it but not

¹³⁹ “By setting as one of his or her objectives ‘separating as little as possible the scientific from the poetic’ the rhythm analyst can begin thinking the spatial and temporal together, as noted, by drawing upon multiple disciplines, including psychology, sociology and anthropology, amongst others (Lefebvre and Régulier 2004 [1986]: 87). Working in this way makes it possible for rhythm analysts to ‘listen to a house, a street, a town, as one listens to a symphony, an opera. [...] The rhythm analyst thus knows how to listen to a square, a market, an avenue’ (Lefebvre and Régulier 2004 [1986]: 87, 89). As part of his or her work, the rhythm analyst ‘seeks to know how this music is composed, who plays it and for whom’ (Lefebvre and Régulier 2004 [1986]: 87) (Coleman, 2015, 123).”

in charge of it all, and this is only logical. The same story, I would say, applies to our struggle to make ourselves understood to one another, to those with whom we share a time reality in this world, but culturally they are maybe far apart from us. When the subject is cultural heritage, it shall be enough that we ourselves know what matters to us. There is no need to prove it and its meanings to the others, as they will never fully know, even if they try. It is only up to each one of us, as cultural groups, to walk our path to the best of our knowledge and belief, as no one else does it or can do it for us, as we are the only one who knows where we are coming from and where we are heading to.

If in any way impactful, my research, but more importantly the approach I have taken for navigating this tiny research, will ideally make some small contribution to bringing or promoting a non-Western viewpoint in heritage discourse; because heritage studies and ‘the modern concept of heritage’ emerged from a European context and then like a trend has been followed and very often even blind-followed all over the world. While, now it is accepted to say that this Western model of heritage in many cases cannot be applicable to all, especially countries like Iran with different conception of life and world, or simply worldview. I want to add that my usage of the words such as Western, European, and so on is not in any way to call out anyone specific on their deeds, as there is no wrong or right for that matter, but rather to only hint at the unnecessary attention that has been given to determining two ends of the sticks, be it North and South, West and East, Democrat and Republican, or whatever else it might be. Still, I am aware that maneuvering around such distorted binaries often gives a misleading impression of the points one tries to make. So, I want to declare that it is not my intention to delineate boundaries whatsoever.

Another point I want to make here is that I do not claim that I offer a list of ‘meanings’; because my ultimate goal is to highlight those kinds of non-materiality and their importance. What I am saying is not solely about those widely-discussed topics of sense of place, identity, public participation, and so on. What I mean is that it is time to think differently about whatever we label as heritage, in the sense that heritage is not the surface of things, rather it is all about the hidden orders behind formation, philosophy of traditions, and intrinsic logic of things which are an integral part of any kind of heritage. And if we want to protect heritage, it is only possible if we first think about what they are/could be. They are and have always been there, but less received the credit they deserve. An analogy for that, I like to use, could be looking at ‘far side of the moon’.

The impact of my research on the case study neighborhoods is more of an indirect impact, through providing a deeper interpretation of the neighborhood’s heritage. As my research is more concerned about the ideological level of the topic, I think it could describe the mentality behind previous attempts of heritage management in Iran and learn about both positive and negative points, potentials, and challenges. My research answers the question of what should be considered and preferably protected as heritage in the context of urban life. It explains why that is important within my discipline and for the vitality of cities. However, I do not voice as much about how to go after materializing what has been missing in our heritage conservation endeavors up to now, and what would be a way forward. So, I suggest, future research could be done on how we go about that. How do we begin better incorporating the non-physical part of heritage in the wheel of our discipline, which is by default characterized by doing rather than feeling, actions rather than emotions, and outcomes rather than impacts? Witcomb and Buckley (2013, 570) argue for “developing heritage studies as a discipline in its own right”; and they portray it as if it “looks outwards, to a variety of other disciplines” and is “itself, at its core, multidisciplinary.” If so, what roles architecture and urban planning as contributing disciplines play in the heritage studies?

Appendices

Appendix A: preparations for field trip

Having vigorously been involved with both theoretical and empirical studies on Tehran's historical center due to my educational background and also throughout my professional career as an architect and urban designer in Iran, prior to my doctoral research, I have already been pretty much informed about this specific case and its potentialities and limitations. Still, based on discourse analysis of place identity which is intertwined with spatiality and sociality, there was need for thorough observation and investigation as key tasks. I also mapped the ways in which buildings appear in the urban fabric and correlate one with another via streets and public space, because it seems to show important qualities of public space as it is shaped (not formed) by and/or with the surrounding mass.

Before on-site work started, I made some preparations, including:

- field research plan

I prepared my field research plan, in the form of a table, based on different layers of my theoretical approach. The table covered different thematic focuses of my research (in total 14, as for example: authenticity, cultural identity, heritage, etc.). For each keyword, I specified 'underlying theoretical grounds', 'hypothesis/assumption', 'main points/questions', 'claims', 'choices of where to investigate for proofs of evidence', and also 'relevant data and/or raw material'.

- fieldwork's statement of purpose

I wrote my fieldwork's statement of purpose, in which I clarified that fieldwork should find out (with emphasis on intangibility of historical public spaces):

- i. what qualities/elements/features structure the meaning of urban built heritage; how could we make heritage something meaningful for people's lives?
- ii. which attributes of historic urban fabric carry heritage values; and in where, they could be tracked?
- iii. how are people involved in public spaces of old neighborhood areas?
- iv. what does 'everyday' stand for, when relating it to urban heritage?
- v. how is it different to aim heritage conservation at place conservation through everyday activities; and what conflicts would emerge along the way?

- interviews planning

I planned to conduct interviews with a number of local authorities, professionals involved in recent or ongoing relevant urban projects, experts working with NGOs and urban activists, and also independent scholars. Arranging the interviews required me to prepare:

- › appointment request letter; and contacting my potential interviewees via email or phone call, in order to arrange a meeting time and place with each
- › informed consent form, to be signed by interviewee and me at the end of each interview, in two copies (one to be kept by interviewee, and the other for my archive)
- › interview guide (the structure and questions of semi-structured interviews with experts)

Major issues covered in interview guide:

- definitions / interpretations of the term heritage
- Tehran's heritage
- purpose / value system / key players / priorities / direction of Iran's heritage conservation decision making
- policies and legislations for Iran's heritage conservation practice
- neglects / conflicts / barriers / challenges of heritage management in Iran
- people's role / community involvement
- place conservation through everyday activities.

Appendix B: appointment request letter for semi-structured interviews with experts

The images below show a sample of the template I used for the letter. Individuals' names, recipient's address, as well as my own personal contact details in Tehran are erased for confidentiality reasons.



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درخواست قرار ملاقات برای مصاحبه حضوری، مرتبط با رساله دکتری با عنوان:

“Cities, towards Missing Identities?”

Synergy Management of Sustainable Protection and Use of Cultural Urban Heritage
in the Context of Global Change - the Case of Tehran”

Fachbereich Architektur

Fachgebiet Entwerfen und
Stadtentwicklung

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خانم دکتر ،

با سلام و احترام،

اینجانب سحر خشنود، کارشناس معماری و کارشناس ارشد طراحی شهری، فارغ التحصیل پردیس هنرهای زیبا دانشگاه تهران؛ و در حال حاضر، دانشجوی دکتری در دانشکده معماری دانشگاه فنی دارمشتات کشور آلمان هستم. پس از اتمام تحصیلاتم در ایران، به مدت بیش از سه سال به عنوان معمار و طراح شهری در پروژه‌های اجرایی و تحقیقاتی مختلفی با شرکت‌های مهندسی مشاور (از جمله با شرکت مهندسی مشاور هرمی در طرح “سامان‌دهی سیمای شبانه و روزانه اماکن و فضاها در مرکز تاریخی شهر تهران”) و همچنین با تعدادی از اساتید سابقم در دانشگاه تهران (آقایان دکتر و دکتر) همکاری داشتم؛ و هم‌زمان، به تدریس در دانشگاه آزاد اسلامی نیز پرداختم. طی چندین سال، مطالعات و تحقیقات و زمینه کار حرفه‌ای‌ام بیشتر بر ابعاد مختلف تغییر و تحول محله‌های درون‌شهری و به ویژه جریان‌های مداخله در بافت شهری با رویکرد معاصر سازی مراکز تاریخی متمرکز بود. در ادامه این علاقه‌مندی به محله‌های تاریخی شهر و بررسی سیر دگرگونی‌ها، موضوع رساله دکتری‌ام به مفهوم همواره در حال گذار “میراث شهری” و مقصود بنیادین آن می‌پردازد. پس از تکمیل مطالعات پایه و تدوین چارچوب نظری تحقیق، اکنون در مرحله پژوهش تجربی، با تمرکز بر کیفیات ناملموس اماکن و فضاهای عمومی در بافت تاریخی شهر، به دنبال فهم بهتر معنای میراث شهری تهران (به عنوان نمونه موردی) برای مردم آن و پی بردن به چگونگی و چرایی معنادار بودن/شدن آن برای کاربران مستمر و به طور خاص ساکنان محلی هستیم. در این راستا، شناخت دیدگاه مسئولان محلی و متخصصان فعال در حوزه مدیریت میراث شهری، با هدف اطلاع از اصول و شیوه‌های جاری حفاظت از بافت شهری تهران مرکزی، برای تکمیل این مرحله از پروژه تحقیقاتی‌ام ضرورت دارد.

با توضیحات فوق و به منظور آگاهی از نظرات و فعالیت‌های تخصصی شما، تقاضای پذیرش درخواستم برای یک مصاحبه کوتاه (حدود ۳۰ تا ۴۵ دقیقه) را دارم. بر اساس برنامه زمان‌بندی پیش‌بینی شده برای اقامت چند هفته‌ای من در تهران به منظور انجام تحقیقات مفصل میدانی و همچنین انجام مصاحبه‌ها، تعیین یک قرار ملاقات در بازه زمانی شنبه ۲ خرداد ۱۳۹۴ تا پنج‌شنبه ۴ تیر ۱۳۹۴ را درخواست می‌کنم.

برای اطلاع شما، محورهای کلی گفتگو عبارت خواهند بود از:

- موضوع و اهداف پروژه‌های اخیر شما (تکمیل شده یا در حال پیشرفت) در مرکز تاریخی شهر تهران، محدوده حصار صفوی
- مبانی نظری و نوع رویکرد پروژه به مقوله حفاظت و احیای میراث شهری در مراحل برنامه‌ریزی، طراحی، و اجرا
- نوع نگرش به پتانسیل‌های اجتماعی و فرهنگی بافت در مقیاس محلی در فرآیند تعریف و توسعه پروژه‌های مرمت شهری

لازم به ذکر است که اظهارات شما در طول مصاحبه تنها با اهداف آکادمیک مورد ارجاع و تحلیل قرار خواهند گرفت؛ محرمانه ماندن اطلاعات شخصی شما تضمین خواهد شد؛ و در صورت تمایل شما، دسترسی به نتیجه نهایی پژوهش برای‌تان فراهم خواهد بود.

پیشاپیش از وقت و توجه شما سپاسگزارم؛ و بی‌صبرانه منتظر پاسخ مثبت شما به این درخواست و ملاقات‌تان در هفته‌های آتی هستم.

ارادتمند،

سحر خشنود

تهران، یکشنبه ۱۳ اردیبهشت ۱۳۹۴

در اولین فرصت با من تماس بگیرید.

پی‌نوشت: خواهشمندم در صورت وجود هرگونه ابهام یا سوال، از طریق آدرس ایمیل @gmail.com یا در صورت ترجیح، از طریق نشانی و شماره‌های زیر: تهران، خیابان

راهنمای مصاحبه

میراث

۱. تعریف شما از میراث چیست؟ (این واژه چه مفاهیمی را در بر دارد؟)

- آیا شما فکر می‌کنید که اکثر مردم با شما موافق هستند؟ یا این که تفسیرهای مختلفی از میراث وجود دارد که به هنگام سیاست‌گذاری و در عمل حتی در تقابل با یکدیگر نیز قرار می‌گیرند؟
- شما از چه معیارهایی (سیستم ارزش‌گذاری) استفاده می‌کنید تا تصمیم بگیرید چه چیزی میراث هست یا نیست؟
- آیا میراث ملی و میراث محلی متفاوت هستند؟ چه تفاوتی دارند؟

میراث محلی

۲. منظور از عبارت میراث محلی به طور دقیق چیست؟

- منظور از محلی بودن چیست و چه کسی مشخص می‌کند که چیزی محلی هست یا نیست؟
- آیا برای تهران یک لیست میراث محلی وجود دارد؟ اگر بله، هدف از تهیه چنین لیستی چه بوده است؟ آیا مواردی در این لیست گردآوری شده‌اند که در فهرست آثار ملی به آن‌ها پرداخته نشده است؟
- اگر خیر، آیا شما فکر می‌کنید که یک نیاز / فشار برای تهیه چنین لیستی وجود دارد؟ بهتر است چه کسی پیشنهاد دهنده موارد احتمالی برای لیست شدن به عنوان میراث محلی تهران باشد؟ بهتر است چه کسی مسئول تصمیم‌گیری نهایی باشد؟

هدف

۳. منظور و هدف از سیاست‌ها و قوانین حفاظت از میراث چیست؟

- خطوط راهنمای اصلی برای مدیریت میراث در ایران به طور کلی، و در تهران به طور خاص چیست؟
- به نظر می‌رسد که معیار شاخص بودن در فرآیند انتخاب و فهرست شدن موارد میراثی نقش بسزایی دارد. چه کسی شاخص بودن را تعیین می‌کند؟ چگونه و با چه اهدافی در ذهن؟
- معنای شاخص بودن برای شناسایی و ارزیابی میراث تهران چیست؟ چه چیزی میراث تهران را متمایز می‌سازد؟ (قدمت، نایابی، یادمانی بودن، ...؟)
- اصالت و هویت چه اهمیتی دارند؟ آیا این مهم است که حافظه جمعی را برای پی بردن به تحول تاریخی یک مکان و روایت‌های محلی جستجو کنیم تا میراث‌های پنهان / کمتر شناخته‌شده را کشف کنیم؟ تا چه حدی این کار انجام می‌شود؟ (مثال؟)
- تا چه حدی بافت تاریخی تهران به عنوان یک میراث زنده که در آن زندگی جاری است شناخته می‌شود؟ چگونه؟

جهت میراث

۴. چگونه بحث میراث در دهه اخیر دچار دگرگونی شده است؟ آیا نقاط تاکید آن تغییری داشته است؟

- آیا به نظر شما در طول زمان تعریف میراث و آن چه میراثی است گسترش پیدا کرده است؟ آیا در حال تغییر است؟ چگونه / در چه مسیری؟

- از نظر مدیریت میراث، ایران در چه مسیری در حال حرکت بوده است؟
- اولویت‌های سیاست‌گذاری میراث در ایران کدام است؟
- آیا شما فکر می‌کنید که بخش‌های مهمی از میراث در سیاست‌های کنونی مورد غفلت قرار می‌گیرند؟ (مثال؟)
- آیا میراث محلی در حوزه مسئولیتی / تخصصی شما یک اولویت محسوب می‌شود؟ آیا شما از یک قانون / راهنمای مشخص برای میراث محلی پیروی می‌کنید؟ یا از روشی مختص خودتان استفاده می‌کنید؟

مشارکت اجتماعی

۵. چه کسانی در شناسایی و تعیین میراث نقش اصلی را ایفا می‌کنند؟

- از نظر شما کدام نهادها / افراد در فرآیند شناسایی و تعیین میراث مهم‌ترین و مطلع‌ترین هستند؟
- شما میراث و مردم را از چه نظر و چگونه مرتبط با هم می‌دانید؟ (از نظر ارزیابی مفهوم میراث محلی، تعریف شاخصه‌ها، و تعیین آن) آیا شما فکر می‌کنید که مردم حرف‌های مفیدی برای زدن و مشارکت کردن دارند؟
- درگیر نمودن مردم یعنی چه؟ شما نقش جامعه را در این فرآیند چه می‌بینید؟ چه سطح و نوعی از درگیر شدن مورد انتظار است؟ (مثال؟)
- آیا شما پروژه‌ای با مشارکت اجتماعی را انجام داده‌اید؟ چگونه؟ هدف پروژه چه بوده است؟ آیا می‌توانید به طور مختصر توضیحی در مورد فرآیند انجام پروژه ارائه دهید؟ (اجتماع را چگونه تعریف کردید؟ و...) در مورد موضوع، چشم‌انداز برنامه‌ریزی، و دیدگاه طراحی بیشتر توضیح دهید.
- آیا به نظر شما مشارکت اجتماعی با موفقیت همراه بوده است؟ چگونه می‌توانست موفق‌تر باشد؟
- از نظر شما چه موانعی برای درگیر شدن عموم در فرآیند تعیین میراث محلی وجود دارد؟ (منابع - پول، مهارت، زمان، ...؟) آیا راه‌هایی برای غلبه بر چنین موانعی وجود دارد؟

ارزش‌های حفاظت

۶. در اساسنامه میراث فرهنگی سازمان میراث فرهنگی، صنایع دستی و گردشگری کشور به ارزش‌های میراثی اشاره شده است. آیا شما فکر می‌کنید که تمامی ارزش‌های میراثی در مرحله عمل مورد توجه قرار می‌گیرند؟ کدام ارزش‌های میراثی؟

- آیا شما دغدغه‌ای برای ارزش‌های اجتماعی / همگانی می‌بینید؟ آیا شما می‌توانید در قالب یک مثال واقعی تعریفی از ارزش‌های اجتماعی / همگانی در مرحله عمل ارائه دهید؟ چه چیزهایی واجد ارزش اجتماعی / همگانی معرفی خواهند شد؟
- آیا چیزی می‌تواند میراث باشد تنها به خاطر داشتن ارزش اجتماعی / همگانی بدون این که واجد سایر ارزش‌ها باشد؟ (تاریخی، زیبایی - شناسی، اسناد و مدارک، ...)
- آیا شما ارتباطی می‌بینید بین شاخص بودن اجتماعی (معنای اجتماعی داشتن) میراث برای مردم و فعالیت‌های روزمره در فضاهای همگانی مکان‌های تاریخی؟ چه ارتباطی؟

چالش‌های ممکن

۷. روش‌های رایج حفاظت از میراث چه تفاوتی پیدا خواهد کرد اگر توجه بیشتری به حفاظت از مکان از طریق احیا و رونق‌بخشی فعالیت‌های روزمره در فضاهای عمومی تاریخی معطوف گردد؟ آیا چنین چیزی شدنی است؟ عملی؟ مناسب؟ در این راه چه مشکلاتی امکان بروز خواهند داشت و چگونه می‌توان آن‌ها را رفع نمود؟

- با در نظر گرفتن معانی اجتماعی ملازم میراث محلی، آیا شما فکر می‌کنید که روش بهتری برای شناسایی و حفاظت از میراث وجود دارد؟
- آیا امکان برقراری پیوند مستقیم بین مدیریت میراث محلی و طرح‌های محله‌های مسکونی، به طور مثال، وجود دارد؟

۸. چنانچه مواردی باقی است که تمایل دارید مطرح کنید بفرمایید.

۹. آیا شخص دیگری را می‌شناسید که برای گفتگو در این زمینه به بنده توصیه کنید؟

Appendix D: interview guide (English version) for semi-structured interviews with experts

Heritage

1. How do you define the term heritage? (What is included in the term)?

- Do you think most people would agree with you? or there are various interpretations of heritage which meet with any conflict in policy or practice?
- What criteria (value systems) are you using to decide what is heritage and what is not?
- Is national heritage different to local heritage? What is the difference?

Local Heritage

2. What exactly is meant by the term local heritage?

- What constitutes local and who determines what is local and what is not?
- Is there a local heritage list in Tehran? If so, what is its purpose? Does it list things which are not already designated as national heritage?

If not, do you think there is a need / pressure to produce one? Who should put things forward as local heritage? Who should be responsible for decision making?

Purpose

3. What are the aims and objectives of heritage conservation policies and legislations?

- What are the main guidelines used to manage heritage in Iran, particularly in Tehran?
- The concept of significance appears to play a vital role in designating heritage process. Who determines significance? How and with what objectives in mind?
- What does significance mean when identifying and assessing Tehran's heritage? What makes Tehran's heritage distinct from all the others? (e.g. age? rarity? monumentality? etc.)

How important is authenticity and identity? Is it important to explore collective memory for the historical evolution of an area and local narratives to capture and understand hidden / under-represented heritages? To what extent does this happen? (Example?)

- To what extent Tehran's historical urban area is being thought about as a living / lived-in heritage? How?

Heritage Direction

4. How has the heritage debate evolved over the past decade? Has the emphasis changed?

- Would you say that the definition of heritage or what constitutes heritage has been extended overtime? Is it changing? How / in what way?
- What directions has Iran been travelling in with regard to heritage management?
- What are the priorities of heritage policy in Iran?
- Can you think of any important areas of heritage neglected by the current policy? (Example?)
- Is local heritage a priority in your authority? Do you follow any particular localism act / guidance? Or do you create your own?

Community Involvement

5. Who are the key players involved with identifying and designating heritage?

- Who do you think are the most important institutions / knowledgeable people in the process?
- How do you relate heritage to people? (in terms of assessing what constitutes local heritage, defining its significance, and designating) Do you think they have useful things to say or contribute?
- What does it mean to include people? What do you see as the role of the community in the process? What level and type of engagement is expected? (Example?)

-
- Have you undertaken any community involvement project? How? What was the purpose? Can you briefly describe the process you have gone through? (i.e. How did you define community? etc.) Expand on the project's theme, planning perspective, and designing approach.
 - In your opinion was the community involvement a success? How could it have been improved?
 - What do you think are the barriers to the public(s) getting involved in the local heritage designation process? (resources- money, skills, time?) Are there any practical measures which can be taken to help overcome such barriers?

Conservation Values

6. Cultural heritage charter of ICHTO introduces the concept of heritage values. Do you think all heritage values are being considered or taken into account at practice level? What are they?

- Can you see a concern for a social / communal value? Can you give a concrete example of what is meant by this in practice? What types of thing would be identified in such a way?
- Can something be heritage purely because of a social / communal value, without satisfying the other values? (historic, aesthetic, evidential etc.)
- Do you see a link between social significances (or social meanings) of heritage for people and everyday activities happening in communal spaces of historic places? How / in what way?

Expected Challenges

7. How different is it to aim heritage conservation at place conservation through everyday activities? Is it feasible? Practical? Suitable? What conflicts would emerge along the way and how could these be overcome?

- Do you think there is a better way of identifying and protecting local heritage, considering social meanings?
- Could the local heritage management be linked to something else, e.g. neighborhood plans?

8. Do you have any other comments?

9. Is there somebody else you could recommend that I speak to?

Appendix E: informed consent form for semi-structured interviews with experts

The image below shows the template I used. My personal contact details in Tehran are erased for confidentiality reasons.



TECHNISCHE
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فرم رضایت نامه آگاهانه برای شرکت در مصاحبه حضوری، مرتبط با رساله دکتری با عنوان:
“Cities, towards Missing Identities?
Synergy Management of Sustainable Protection and Use of Cultural Urban Heritage
in the Context of Global Change - the Case of Tehran”

Fachbereich Architektur

Fachgebiet Entwerfen und
Stadtentwicklung

est

نام و نام خانوادگی مصاحبه شونده:

سمت سازمانی:

تحصیلات:

&

Graduiertenschule URBANgrad



اینجانب تایید می کنم که:
- با دریافت نامه درخواست قرار ملاقات، قبلا از موضوع و اهداف این پروژه تحقیقاتی و همچنین از محورهای کلی گفتگو مطلع شدم؛ و برای شرکت در جلسه مصاحبه حضوری اعلام موافقت نمودم.
- محقق متذکر شده است که اظهارات بنده در طول مصاحبه تنها با اهداف آکادمیک مورد ارجاع و تحلیل قرار خواهند گرفت؛ و محرمانه ماندن اطلاعات شخصی ام تضمین خواهد شد.
- ضبط صدا در طول مصاحبه مجاز است.
تاریخ: امضا:

اینجانب سحر خشنود اطلاعات مرتبط با موضوع و ضرورت پژوهش تجربی ام را در اختیار مصاحبه شونده قرار داده ام؛ و از آگاهی و رضایت ایشان نسبت به شرکت در مصاحبه اطمینان حاصل نموده ام.
تاریخ: امضا:

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اطلاعات تماس با سحر خشنود (محقق/مصاحبه کننده) در ایران:
تهران، خیابان

@gmail.com

Appendix F: expert interviews

	Interviewee Position	Date of Interview	Additional Information
1	- Assistant Professor at Art & Architecture Faculty, Central Tehran Branch of Islamic Azad University - Vice Chairman of Negin Shahr Ayandeh Consulting Engineers	25.05.2015	female, senior professional
2	- Chief Executive Officer at Iran's Urbanism & Architecture Study and Research Center - Former Deputy Head of Iran Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization (ICHTO)	30.05.2015	male, senior professional
3	- Chief at Management Office of Historical Context, Municipality of Tehran's Region 12	31.05.2015	male, senior professional
4	- Head at Office of Preservation and Restoration of Buildings, Sites, and Historical Contexts in Iran Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization (ICHTO)	06.06.2015	male, senior professional
5	- Assistant Professor at Art & Architecture Faculty, Central Tehran Branch of Islamic Azad University	08.06.2015	male, senior professional
6	- Head at Office of Listing and Safeguarding of Intangible and Natural Heritage in Iran Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization (ICHTO)	09.06.2015	male, senior professional
7	- Manager at Local Office of Bavand Consultants	15.06.2015	female, senior professional
8	- Technical and Exploitation Deputy Manager at Revitalization and Utilization Fund for Historical Places	20.06.2015	male, senior professional
9	- Deputy of Urbanism and Architecture at Municipality of Tehran's Region 12	22.06.2015	male, senior professional
10	- Former Chief Executive Officer and Chairman of the Board at Revitalization and Utilization Fund for Historical Places	23.06.2015	male, senior professional
11	- researcher and activist on Tehran	23.06.2015	male
12	- Experts at Office of Preservation and Restoration of Buildings, Sites, and Historical Contexts in Iran Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization (ICHTO)	27.05.2015	3 males, senior professionals

Appendix G: informal conversations

This list includes only those (short/long and in-depth) informal conversations with individuals and groups that have been audio recorded on-site and later transcribed.

	Individual or Group	Date of Talk	Additional Information
1	case study 1_01_shopkeeper(herbal medicine)	01.06.2015	male
2	case study 1_02_barber+visitor+customer	01.06.2015	male
3	case study 1_03_housewives	01.06.2015	female
4	case study 1_04_gardener+oldman	01.06.2015	male
5	case study 1_05_shoemakers	02.06.2015	male
6	case study 2_01_tailor	31.05.2015	male
7	case study 2_02_shopkeeper(clothing)+lady	02.06.2015	male and female
8	case study 2_03_shopkeepers(date)	02.06.2015	male
9	case study 2_04_revolutionary man	02.06.2015	male
10	case study 3_01_barber+others	13.06.2015	male
11	case study 3_02_culture house	13.06.2015	male

Appendix H: Laws of Economic, Social, and Cultural Development Plan of the I. R. of Iran

	for years (C.E.* / A.H.S.**)	approved on (dd.mm.yyyy* / yyyy.mm.dd**)	consists of
1st	1989-1993 / 1368-1372	31.01.1990 / 1368.11.11	a single article and 52 notes
2nd	1995-1999 / 1374-1378	11.12.1994 / 1373.09.20	a single article and 101 notes
3rd	2000-2005 / 1379-1384	05.04.2000 / 1379.01.17	3 sections and 26 chapters and 199 articles
4th	2005-2009 / 1384-1388	01.09.2004 / 1383.06.11	6 sections and 15 chapters and 161 articles
5th	2011-2015 / 1390-1394	05.01.2011 / 1389.10.15	9 chapters and 235 articles and 192 notes
6th	2017-2021 / 1396-1400	11.03.2017 / 1395.12.21	20 chapters and 124 articles and 128 notes

* based on Common Era

** based on Iranian Solar Hijri Calendar

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